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HUMAN RIGHTS in NICARAGUA under the SANDINISTAS

From Revolution to Repression

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Summary

In July 1979, the Sandinista-led revolutionary junta pledged to the people of Nicaragua and the Organization of American States that it would fully respect human rights. The Sandinistas have systematically violated this pledge, trampling on the rights of the Nicaraguan people as they pushed aside the democratic members of the original revolutionary coalition and worked to consolidate their Marxist-Leninist regime.

The Sandinista government has suspended civil and political rights through an escalating series of emergency decrees. It has developed a powerful internal security apparatus—trained and advised by hundreds of Cuban and Soviet-bloc experts—which includes a 4,000-man secret police force, ten times as large as Somoza's. It has built a highly politicized army—the largest in the history of Central America—which is ten times as large as Somoza's. It has created special tribunals free of the rules and protections of the traditional judicial system to ensure that dissidents cannot escape "revolutionary justice."

Sandinista "mass organizations" serve as an intelligence network and provide a mechanism for social control. The largest of these, the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS)—block committees modeled after Cuba's Committees for the Defense of the Revolution—control ration cards and access to important government services. The most radical elements of these "mass organizations" form the *turbas divinas*, the Sandinista "divine mobs" which—under the direction of the secret police—attack, beat, and intimidate dissidents.

The Sandinistas have murdered thousands of political opponents and since 1981 have had a secret program for summary executions, termed "special measures." They hold 7,500–10,000 political prisoners, many held incommunicado in secret police prisons and subjected to physical and psychological abuse.

The Sandinistas have attempted to crush groups that oppose their Marxist-Leninist system, including democratic parties, the private sector, independent labor confederations, and even the church. They have suppressed the free press, directly controlling the television system, most radio stations, and both of the country's newspapers. They first imposed strict censorship on and ultimately closed the only independent newspaper, *La Prensa.*

The expansion of the State of Emergency declared on October 15, 1985, was accompanied by intensified persecution of several groups:

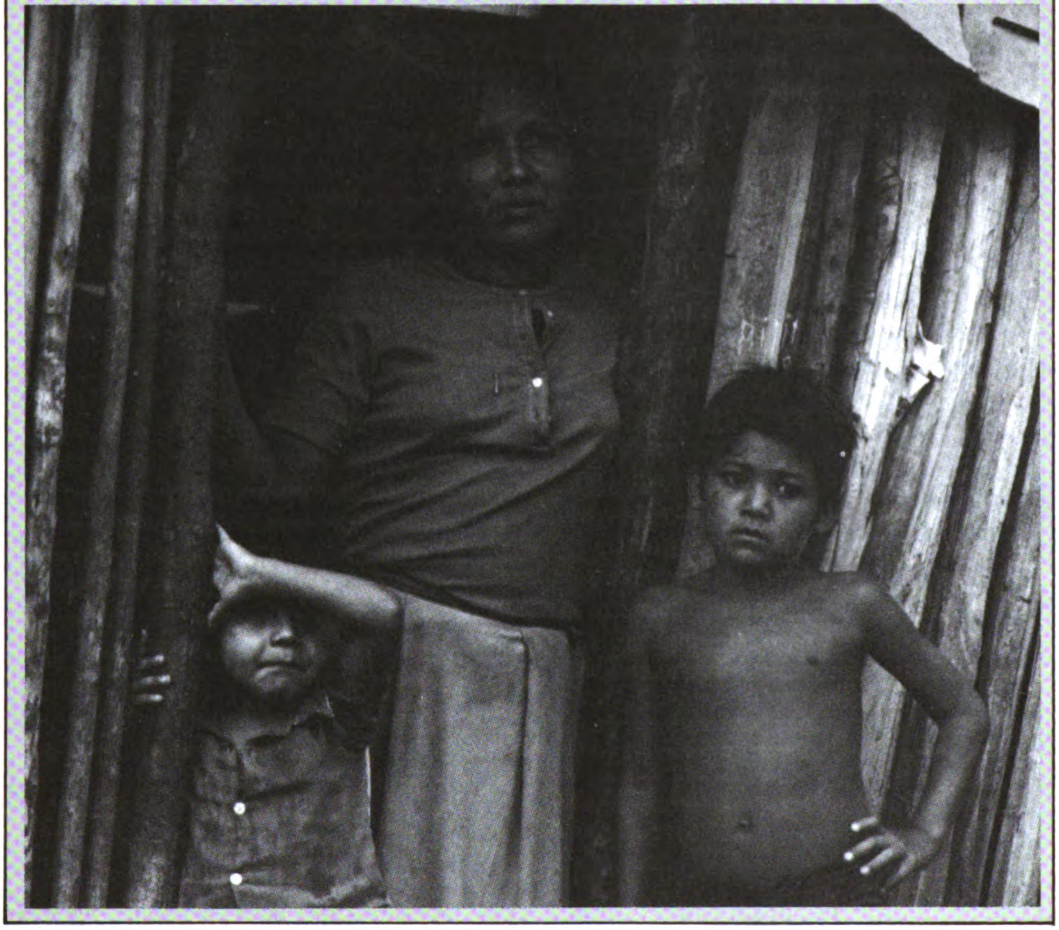
- The Catholic newsletter *Iglesia* was banned, *Radio Catolica* was ordered closed, and the offices of the church's social service agency and its human rights commission were occupied by the secret police. Many religious leaders, both Catholic and Protestant, were arrested and interrogated.
- *La Prensa* was ordered not to distribute censored articles—articles that belied the Sandinistas' claim that only news concerning national security was banned—even to embassies and foreign journalists. *La Prensa* was temporarily closed when it protested this latest infringement of its rights. In June 1986, it was closed indefinitely.

- The Permanent Commission on Human Rights, which has played a key role in exposing Sandinista abuses, was ordered to submit all its communications—letters, communiques, monthly and special reports—to prior government censorship. (The commission estimates that it is able to document only about ten percent of the killings and other abuses committed by Sandinista forces because people are afraid to sign complaints against the government.)
- Numerous political, business, and labor leaders were detained and threatened.

The Sandinistas' efforts to impose their Communist system on the indigenous peoples of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast brought a cultural calamity to that region. Tens of thousands of Indians were forced into resettlement camps or fled into exile as a result of the Sandinistas' "scorched earth" policy.

The Sandinistas argue that any abuses they may commit are the result of mounting armed resistance. The facts are clear, however, that the pattern of Sandinista repression began long before significant armed opposition arose. The record shows that Sandinista violation of human rights is a primary cause of the growing resistance to their regime, not a result.

Whereas Nicaragua was united in 1979, the Sandinistas' betrayal of the revolution has divided the nation. Every day disenchanted Nicaraguans who once had supported the Sandinistas are now turning against them. As the ranks of their supporters dwindle and the level of discontent rises, the Sandinistas resort to ever greater repression of their own people to maintain their grasp on power.



Since the Sandinista revolution, nearly 200,000 Nicaraguans, mostly peasants, have sought refuge in other Central American countries, especially Honduras and Costa Rica.

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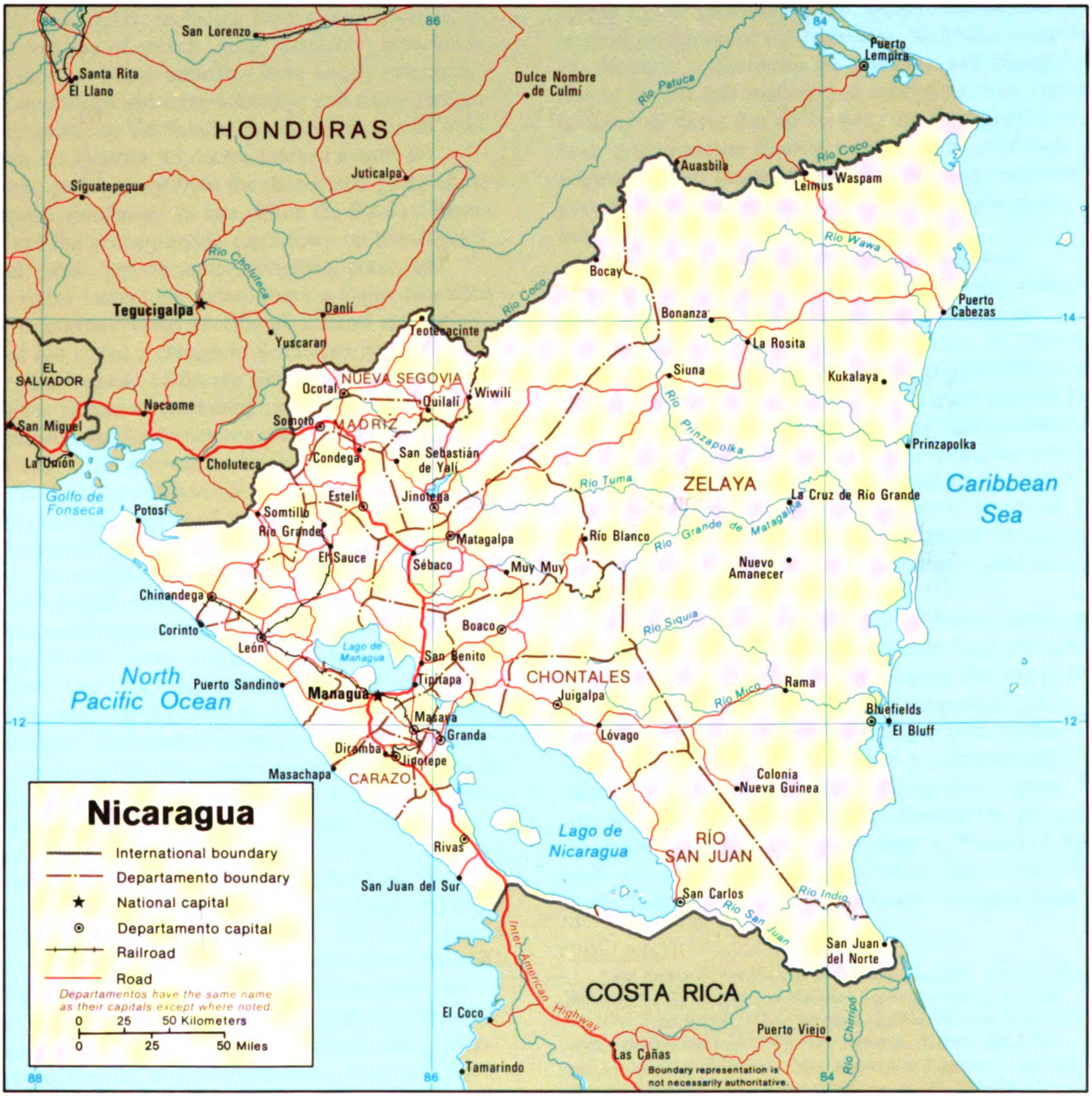
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Rivas
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I. Introduction

On October 15, 1985, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega announced the extension of the three-year-old State of Emergency and expanded restrictions on virtually all civil rights, including fundamental liberties such as freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and movement. These measures were widely criticized both domestically and internationally, and many foreigners sympathetic to the Sandinista regime expressed concern that the October 15 decree marked a shift in Sandinista policy away from the democratic goals of the Nicaraguan revolution. In fact, while the State of Emergency and the accompanying crackdown on Nicaragua's political, labor, private sector, religious, press, and human rights leaders did indeed mark a major escalation in the Sandinistas' drive to stifle all internal opposition, they did not signal a change in Sandinista policy. Rather, the October 15 decree simply advanced one step further the pattern of increasing repression which has characterized the Sandinista regime since 1979.

In July 1979, a broad coalition of Nicaraguans overthrew the Somoza dictatorship and established a revolutionary government pledged to political pluralism, a mixed economy, and international nonalignment. While this new government was dominated by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), it included and had the enthusiastic support of Nicaraguans of many political persuasions who believed in the revolution's declared objectives. One of the factors that had united these diverse groups was the Somoza regime's disregard for human rights. The leaders of the revolutionary movement pledged to the Nicaraguan people—and formally in a message sent to the Organization of American States (OAS)—that their new government would fully respect human rights.[1]

Tragically, this promise has not been kept. As the Sandinistas have consolidated their power and imposed a Marxist-Leninist model on Nicaragua, they have ignored the original goals of the revolution and institutionalized violations of human rights. The Sandinistas have engaged in a systematic pattern of politically motivated assassinations and disappearances, physical and psychological torture, and arbitrary detention. They are committing these abuses in an atmosphere characterized by persecution and harassment of opposition political parties, the private sector, independent free trade unions, the church, and the press; the forced relocation of tens of thousands away from their traditional homelands; and the heavy use of omnipresent secret police and "mass organizations" to spy on citizens and create a generalized climate of fear.

The Sandinistas have systematically worked to conceal their poor human rights record from the outside world. By constantly asserting their commitment to human rights, exploiting honest people dedicated to the original principles of the revolution, skillfully manipulating the press, suppressing the collection and dissemination of critical information, and concocting false reports to cover up cases that do surface, the Sandinistas have been able to escape foreign criticism of most of their abuses. Indeed, the Sandinistas and some of their supporters have even sought to portray Nicaragua as a human rights utopia.[2]

Despite the Sandinistas' efforts at deception, however, their systematic abuses are becoming known. The Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Catholic Church, foreign groups conducting private investigations, journalists, and other sources have shed light on a clear pattern of human rights violations. Disillusioned former officials of the Nicaraguan Interior Ministry and the government-sponsored human rights commission recently have provided inside stories of assassinations and torture ordered by senior Sandinista leaders, and of a sophisticated apparatus created to cover up these crimes.

As international criticism of their human rights performance has increased, the Sandinistas have attempted to explain away their abuses by alleging that the growing armed resistance and "foreign aggression" have forced them to take unwanted emergency measures. They insist that such measures are a legitimate and necessary response to the threat facing their regime. The record is clear, however, that the Sandinistas' program to create a repressive one-party state in Nicaragua was well advanced long before any serious armed opposition developed.[3] By the time a significant resistance force evolved in 1982, the Sandinistas had already:

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[1] See Annex 17 for the text of the July 12, 1979, message from the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction to the OAS.

[2] See Fred Barnes, "The Sandinista Lobby: 'Human rights' groups with a double standard," *The New Republic*, January 20, 1986, pp. 11-14; Paul Hollander, "The Ideological Pilgrims...and now to Managua," *Encounter*, January 1986, pp. 69-70; Charles Krauthammer, "Singing The Sandinista Song," *Washington Post*, November 22, 1985, p. A23; and Neil Henry, "Inside the Revolution: A reporter's search for the spirit of Nicaragua," *Washington Post Magazine*, September 29, 1985, p. 6.

[3] The Sandinistas maintain that no significant armed opposition existed before the end of 1981. See a letter by Nicaraguan Ambassador to the United States Carlos Tunnermann Bernheim, "We Will Never Negotiate With The Contras," *Washington Post*, March 30, 1985, p. A21.

- moved to consolidate their power in the government, forcing out of the junta and cabinet many democratic members of the original revolutionary coalition, such as Violeta Chamorro and Alfonso Robelo, while securing total control of the quasi-legislative Council of State by unilaterally reallocating themselves a majority of the seats.
- delayed the promised elections for five years and interfered repeatedly with organizational activities of Nicaragua's democratic parties.
- created an elaborate military/security apparatus, including a secret police force trained and advised by Cuban and Soviet-bloc experts as well as an array of "mass organizations" to serve as an intelligence network and provide a mechanism for social control.
- implemented a plan for the summary execution of perceived enemies (termed "special measures") and routinely held prisoners for prolonged periods without trial while subjecting them to multiple forms of torture and abuse.
- taken over much of the media—including both the country's television stations, many of its radio stations, and two of its three newspapers—and had taken the first steps to censor the press, such as temporarily closing the independent daily *La Prensa* on several occasions.
- acted to cripple the private sector through oppressive regulations, confiscations, and direct attacks on its leadership, including the assassination of a prominent spokesman and the imprisonment for five months of several business leaders who openly protested the Sandinistas' Marxist policies.
- undermined the free trade union movement, arresting, harassing, and intimidating democratic labor leaders and coercing workers to join FSLN-controlled organizations.
- begun a campaign to divide the church and erode the influence of religious leaders not aligned with the FSLN.
- implemented policies to destroy the culture of the indigenous peoples of the Atlantic Coast region, including the expropriation of their lands, the disruption of the traditional tribal and local government, and the arrest of leaders who protested.
- occupied the offices of the independent human rights commission in retaliation for its exposure of abuses, arresting its president and later forcing him into exile.

The record is clear that, contrary to the Sandinistas' claims, their violation of human rights is a primary cause of the growing opposition to their regime, not the result. The Sandinistas' betrayal of the original goals of the revolution has led ever greater numbers of Nicaraguans to join the civic and armed opposition and to demand that the original democratic goals of the revolution be restored.

This report, *From Revolution to Repression*, consolidates and places in historical perspective information obtained from a variety of public sources about the Sandinistas' human rights performance. To provide the reader with a fuller appreciation of Sandinista repression since 1979, it includes a series of Annexes containing key documents such as reports by the Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; letters by leaders of the private sector, the church, and *La Prensa*; and testimony from former members of the Sandinista security forces and the "official" human rights commission. This report cannot be comprehensive, as most abuses go unreported, but it does provide an overview and representative sampling of human rights violations committed as a matter of policy by the Sandinista regime.[4]

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[4] For general information on Nicaragua since the 1979 revolution, see Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family* (New York: Random House, 1985); and Douglas W. Payne, *The Democratic Mask: The Consolidation of the Sandinista Revolution* (New York: Freedom House, 1985).

II. The Human Rights Commissions

A. The Independent Commission

A principal source of reliable information on the human rights situation is the Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua (CPDH). The CPDH is an independent organization not affiliated with any political party or religious group. It was founded in 1977 by a group of prominent citizens who were deeply troubled by the Somoza government's flagrant violations of human rights. In June 1977, the commission launched its first public campaign, calling for the release from prison of the last surviving founding member of the FSLN, Tomas Borge. (Ironically, Borge has served as Interior Minister since July 1979 and is personally responsible for many abuses now being committed by the Sandinista regime.) The CPDH issued voluminous reports which were highly influential in the international community. Information provided by the CPDH contributed greatly to the 1979 OAS decision to condemn the Somoza regime for its human rights practices.[1]

The CPDH hoped that replacement of the Somoza dictatorship by a revolutionary government pledged to observe human rights would resolve the situation that had brought it into existence. Almost immediately, however, the commission began to receive new reports about abuses committed by the Sandinistas. Senior FSLN officials acknowledged some abuses, but they insisted that these were contrary to policy and resulted from the national government's lack of effective control over local rebel leaders in the disorganized period immediately following Somoza's fall. The Sandinistas gave assurances that such abuses would quickly be curbed as they established clear lines of governmental authority throughout the nation. To the dismay of the CPDH, however, these abuses continued and the Sandinistas, rather than trying to rectify the problem, were both directly responsible for and deliberately trying to cover up violations.

Under these circumstances, relations between the CPDH and the revolutionary government steadily deteriorated. By February 1981, the CPDH had so embarrassed the Sandinistas and their efforts to project a positive human rights image internationally that the FSLN attempted to close the commission by force. Officials from the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior's General Directorate of State Security (DGSE—the Sandinistas' secret police) occupied the CPDH's headquarters in Managua and photocopied its files. They concurrently arrested CPDH president Jose Esteban Gonzalez. This heavy-handed action provoked a sharp international outcry. Aware that these actions were further tarnishing their image abroad, the Sandinistas released Gonzalez and vacated the CPDH headquarters. (Gonzalez subsequently fled into exile under Venezuelan diplomatic protection; he was later tried *in absentia* by the Sandinistas for "counterrevolutionary activity" and condemned to 16 years in prison.)

Since 1981, the CPDH has continued to collect and disseminate data on human rights abuses despite incessant Sandinista efforts to hamper its activities. This harassment has taken the form of denial of CPDH lawyers' access to prisons, threats against and arrest of those who submit cases to the CPDH, and even the detention of CPDH personnel. Following are examples of the continuing pattern of official harassment of CPDH workers:

- In July 1982, a CPDH employee was arrested and held in jail for two months for distributing CPDH literature.
- A CPDH employee in Nueva Guinea was jailed for two months in 1983 for his activities confirming reports of government human rights abuses.
- In 1984, CPDH messengers were called to police and State Security headquarters and pressured to become informants.
- In mid-1985, State Security agents held a CPDH employee at the El Chipote maximum security prison for two months solely because he worked for the commission. The Sandinistas finally freed him only after several international human rights organizations, particularly the Congressional Friends of Human Rights Monitors, raised his case with senior FSLN officials.

The government refuses to accept inquiries submitted by the CPDH and warns the relatives of those detained or disappeared that they must file their case with the Sandinistas' own "official" human rights commission [described below] if they hope to see any action taken.

Following the October 15, 1985, expansion of the State of Emergency, the Sandinistas intensified their pressure on the CPDH and sought to block dissemination of the information it had gathered. On November 14, the head of the Interior Ministry's censorship office summoned the CPDH's national coordinator, Lino Hernandez, and ordered him to submit all CPDH

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[1] See Pax Christi International, *Human Rights Reports of the Mission*, Vol. 2, Nicaragua, October 1981.

Every month, scores of Nicaraguans brave Sandinista threats and harassment to file complaints with the CPDH.

For exposing Sandinista abuses, the CPDH headquarters was occupied by the secret police in February 1981. CPDH president Jose Esteban Gonzalez—seen here taking testimony—was arrested. The sharp international reaction to this action led the Sandinistas to release Gonzalez and return the headquarters to the CPDH (after photocopying its files). Gonzalez later fled into exile and has been sentenced in absentia to 16 years' imprisonment.

communications—letters, communiques, monthly and special reports—to that office for prior censorship. The practical effect of this order would be to prevent the publication of virtually all information on Sandinista human rights violations. The CPDH has stated that it will continue to report on the human rights situation in Nicaragua despite this gag order.[2]

Despite persistent Sandinista harassment and attempts to suppress complaints, in recent years the CPDH has received 80–120 new complaints each month. It estimates that this represents no more than 10% of the total number of human rights abuses that occur. Many people simply are afraid to identify themselves by filing complaints in writing at CPDH offices. (Like most nonpolitical human rights organizations, the CPDH does not actively seek out cases of human rights abuses but generally limits its investigations to complaints that are formally filed at its office.)

The CPDH is recognized and respected internationally as a reputable human rights organization. The commissions on human rights of the United Nations and the OAS, the International Commission of Jurists, the International Society for Human Rights, the International League for Human Rights, the International Court for Human Rights, and the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights have all shown confidence in and support of the CPDH's work.

The CPDH believes it has survived, although operating in an extremely restricted manner, primarily as a result of strong international pressure on the Sandinistas by international human rights organizations and democratic governments. The Sandinistas make a virtue of necessity by using the existence of the CPDH to "demonstrate" to foreigners that the human rights situation in Nicaragua is fully and independently monitored. The CPDH fears, however, that increased Sandinista intimidation of its staff and those who file complaints with it will eventually turn the commission into a token organization incapable of effectively carrying out its mission.

The paradoxical situation of the CPDH's precarious nine-year existence under both right-wing and left-wing dictatorships has been expressed by its current national coordinator, Lino Hernandez:

> When the triumph of the Nicaraguan people against the Somoza dictatorship took place, we thought, logically, now would follow a time of respect for human rights because 50,000 people died in an insurrection precisely to alter the situation in the human rights area.[3]

Exiled CPDH founder Jose Esteban Gonzalez summarized the human rights situation in Nicaragua today:

> Things are now qualitatively and quantitatively worse than in Somoza's time. Quantitatively because in pure statistical terms the number of dead, tortured, imprisoned and exiled is higher than in any comparable period of the Somoza regime, even in absolute terms. Take for example the number of refugees, the exiles: there are now more exiles than in all 45 years of Somoza.[4] And qualitatively because Somoza, of course, was a dictator, but he attacked mainly his enemies and did not bother much about people who were not engaged in politics. The Sandinistas, on the other hand, don't leave anyone in peace. They try to get explicit support of everyone, otherwise you are considered an agent of imperialism, of the CIA, and you are thus treated as a traitor.[5]

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[2] Following these events, numerous international human rights monitors protested this latest government repression of the CPDH. For example, in late November, Americas Watch, a U.S.-based human rights organization that has written favorably about the Nicaraguan Government's human rights record, dispatched a special representative to convey to the government its concerns about the actions taken against the CPDH and increased incidents of human rights abuses. For further information, see Stephen Kinzer, "Nicaragua Said to Order Censorship of Rights Unit," *New York Times*, November 22, 1985, p. A9; and Annex 4 for "Managua Muzzles Human Rights Watchdog," a letter by Nina H. Shea, Program Director of the International League for Human Rights, printed in the *New York Times*, December 3, 1985.

[3] *Dossier Nicaragua*, Number 2, January 14, 1985, a publication of the Europa-Nicaragua Committee, Brussels, Belgium.

[4] Press reports indicate that as many as 500,000 Nicaraguans may have fled their country since 1979. Precise statistics on exiles are impossible to obtain, since many leave Nicaragua and enter and live in the receiving country illegally (i.e. not registered as refugees). The first wave of exiles consisted largely of associates of the deposed Somoza regime. As the Sandinistas became progressively repressive, emigration expanded to include a broad cross-section of the Nicaraguan people, including professionals, skilled and unskilled workers, peasants resisting forced relocations, political and labor activists, religious workers, minority groups, and young men escaping compulsory military service in the Sandinista army. An estimated 200,000–250,000 Nicaraguan exiles are living in Costa Rica. See Jaime Daremblum, "Costa Rica Responds to the Enemy Within," *Wall Street Journal*, June 14, 1985, p. 25; and Vince and Ann Magnotta, "Costa Rica's Literacy Boom," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 1, 1985, p. 31. A somewhat smaller number of 50,000–150,000 appear to have fled to Honduras with tens of thousands of youths arriving after conscription began in January 1984. Approximately 20,000–25,000 Nicaraguan Miskito Indians live in Honduras as registered refugees or illegal aliens. See Robert J. McCartney, "Waiting in Honduras: Nicaraguans Fleeing War and Draft Form Support Base for Guerrillas," *Washington Post*, September 6, 1985, p. Al; Stephen Kinzer, "Nicaragua Men Fleeing Draft Fill Honduran Refugee Camp," *New York Times*, April 11, 1985, p. Al; and Nancy Nusser, "Nicaragua's uprooted Indians," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 26, 1985, p. 16. In the United States, it is estimated that 100,000–200,000 illegal Nicaraguan immigrants have arrived since 1979, and some Nicaraguans are now being assisted by the controversial sanctuary movements. See George Volsky, "Group Would Aid Nicaraguans Here," *New York Times*, August 28, 1985, p. All; Michael Novak, "Illusions About Nicaragua," *National Review*, June 29, 1984, p. 38; and David Maraniss, "In the Valley: The Sanctuary House," *Washington Post*, November 20, 1985, p. Al. No reliable estimates are available for Nicaraguans who have fled to Mexico and other Latin American countries or to Europe.

[5] *Dossier Nicaragua*. See Annex 3 for further information on the CPDH.

B. The Official Commission

In 1980, the Sandinistas attempted to minimize the damage being done to their international reputation by the revelations of the CPDH by establishing their own rival commission. In August of that year, the governing junta decreed the formation of the National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (CNPPDH). Ostensibly the CNPPDH was an autonomous organization funded by the government whose mission was to identify and rectify possible violations of human rights in Nicaragua. It was also charged with serving as liaison with foreign governments and international organizations on human rights matters. By the nature of its responsibilities, the CNPPDH was to work closely with the Foreign and Interior Ministries. It was the only body officially recognized by the Sandinista government as competent to submit requests for pardons or other forms of review of cases in which human rights violations were alleged.[6]

In order to establish the credibility of this government-sponsored commission, the Sandinistas included on its board a number of well-known figures with good human rights credentials. While the first year of Sandinista rule had shaken the faith of many of those who had formed the broad anti-Somoza coalition of 1979, a good number of democratically oriented Nicaraguans were still willing to cooperate with the Sandinistas to achieve the promises of the revolution. Hence, the CNPPDH's original board of commissioners included independent and vocal defenders of human rights. Two such members were Ismael Reyes Rojas, a prominent businessman and long-time president of the Nicaraguan Red Cross, and Edgard Macias, a leader of the Popular Social Christian Party and Vice Minister of Labor.

The first president of the CNPPDH was Leonte Herdocia, a respected proponent of human rights who was a strong supporter of the FSLN. Herdocia concurrently held the rank of ambassador and headed the Foreign Ministry's International Organizations Division.

During its early days, the CNPPDH enjoyed a degree of latitude in its operations. It investigated some cases of abuses, reviewed cases of convicted prisoners and recommended pardons, and had access to prisons. Nevertheless, much of the commission's efforts were devoted to defending the revolutionary government's human rights record internationally. The Foreign Ministry, through CNPPDH president Herdocia, exerted considerable influence over the commission, even though this influence was subtle at first.

In 1982, the Sandinistas acted to rid the commission of members who had vigorously defended human rights and to replace them with new commissioners sympathetic to the FSLN: Agustin Fuentes, a newsman with the pro-Sandinista newspaper *El Nuevo Diario* and the owner of *Radio Noticias*, both subsidized by the Nicaraguan Government, who had accompanied Interior Minister Borge on trips abroad as Borge's personal media representative; Jose Maria Alvarado, an Interior Ministry captain and currently head of the government's Telecommunications and Postal Office (TELCOR); Gonzalo Ramirez Morales, an army doctor in the military hospital in Managua and currently president of the Nicaraguan Red Cross (taken over by the Sandinistas in 1982–83); Zulema Baltodano Marchenaro, leader of the Sandinista organization "Mothers of the Heroes and Martyrs" and mother of FSLN *comandante* and coordinator of municipal affairs Monica Baltodano; Sixto Ulloa, currently an FSLN delegate to the National Assembly and a leader of a pro-Sandinista church organization; and Ramiro Lacayo Montealegre, another FSLN delegate to the National Assembly.

The Sandinistas subsequently undertook to discredit and drive into exile members of the original commission who had become political liabilities. In June 1982, for example, they fabricated charges that Edgard Macias was a U.S. intelligence agent, causing him to seek asylum at the Venezuelan embassy in Managua and, subsequently, to flee the country. Shortly thereafter, they initiated a campaign to smear Ismael Reyes, and he finally went into exile the following year.[7]

Under the new commission, the CNPPDH's limited success in defending human rights was sharply reduced. Members of the CNPPDH staff attempting to conduct honest investigations increasingly were rebuffed by prison officials. Their access to prisons was reduced, and secret police maximum security prisons, such as El Chipote in Managua, were placed off limits by the Interior Ministry. The chief of the penitentiary system, Captain Raul Cordon, scoffed at CNPPDH efforts to conduct investigations; he often refused to meet with CNPPDH officials and on at least one occasion even tore up their letter in their faces. Concurrently, the Foreign Ministry's influence over the CNPPDH became more overt. For example, reports prepared by the Foreign Ministry were falsely attributed to the commission.

The Foreign Ministry's domination of the CNPPDH became more heavy handed following Herdocia's death in November 1983. Alejandro Bendana, Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry, assumed responsibility for monitoring the CNPPDH and moved rapidly to strengthen his control over the commission's activities. Bendana met regularly with CNPPDH members and gave them instructions about what positions they should adopt at international conferences, how they should impress visiting delegations with Nicaragua's human rights record, etc.[8] For example:

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[6] See Annex 4 for information on the CNPPDH provided by two former employees.

[7] See Chapter VI for further details on Sandinista persecution of Reyes.

- In April 1984, Bendana instructed the commission to take charge of a visit by Juan Mendez of Americas Watch, a U.S.-based human rights organization that has written favorably about the Nicaraguan Government's human rights record. The CNPPDH was ordered to assist Mendez, provide him with a car, and arrange his interviews with government entities such as the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice, and the People's Anti-Somocista Tribunals. Afterward the CNPPDH was required to report to Bendana on the results of the visit.
- In September 1984, Bendana ordered the CNPPDH to provide full support to American lawyers Reed Brody and James Bordelon who were preparing a report on human rights abuses by the armed opposition—a report to be used in the United States by groups opposed to U.S. policy. The CNPPDH provided Brody and Bordelon with an office at its headquarters in Managua, lodging in an FSLN-owned hotel managed by commission member Zulema Baltodano, and transportation. It also paid all the bills incurred during their visit, totaling some 50,000 cordobas [the Nicaraguan currency], which Bendana agreed to reimburse out of Foreign Ministry funds. Sister Mary Hartman, an American nun who works for the CNPPDH, arranged interviews and sent Brody and Bordelon to investigate cases the government wanted to promote.[9]

In January 1985, Bendana ordered the CNPPDH to cease investigating all cases of human rights abuses by the Nicaraguan Government, particularly those connected with the military draft (Patriotic Military Service—SMP) or the forced relocations of communities in the northern Departments of Nueva Segovia, Matagalpa, and Jinotega. Bendana said that, on the authority of President Daniel Ortega and Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto, he would direct the CNPPDH to denounce abuses allegedly committed by anti-Sandinista forces. He noted that the CNPPDH would help establish a network of foreign human rights organizations to publicize these abuses throughout the world.

Bendana complained that some members of the CNPPDH were failing to protect the regime from criticism. He ordered an internal investigation for the purpose of purging those who supported investigations independent of government influence. He revealed plans to restructure the commission and appoint new members and staff totally loyal to the FSLN. The new president would be Plutarco Anduray, a close friend of Interior Minister Borge. Anduray had been recommended to Bendana by national penitentiary system chief Captain Raul Cordon.

In a ceremony at the Foreign Ministry in late June, President Daniel Ortega swore in Anduray and the other new commissioners. All were strong supporters of the FSLN, including persons from the Foreign Ministry, the Sandinista radio station, and the Sandinista "Popular Church."

During July, Anduray removed from the CNPPDH those remaining staff members who believed that the commission should actively promote human rights.[10] He fired seven employees, including three lawyers and an executive secretary. Six other CNPPDH workers promptly resigned in protest over the dismissals. This almost anti-climactic series of events stripped the CNPPDH of its last vestiges of independence and left it to function solely as a propaganda arm of the Sandinista government.[11]

C. The Church's Commission

In October 1985, amid a marked escalation in Sandinista repression, the Catholic Church inaugurated its Commission for Justice and Peace dedicated to the promotion and defense of human rights. Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, the archbishop of Managua, presided over the commission. It was originally housed in the Managua offices of the Archdiocesan Commission for Social Advancement (COPROSA), the Curia's social services agency. On October 15, however, agents of the Sandinista secret police occupied COPROSA, expelling the staff and confiscating all materials and files, including the new commission's project plans and preliminary records. This occupation of COPROSA forced the commission to relocate to the Curia and ultimately prevented it from becoming operational.[12]

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[8] A vivid description of Sandinista practices intended to deceive visitors is contained in a study by Linda Westrom and Jane Olten appearing in the *Congressional Record* of April 16, 1985, H2042-51, under the title "Report On Travel Seminar Conducted By Center for Global Service And Education, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN."

[9] Brody has acknowledged that his "investigation" was initiated at the request of the Washington, D.C., law firm Reichler and Applebaum which represents the Nicaraguan Government. A former CNPPDH official has stated that while in Managua the two American lawyers made no effort to conceal their strong support for the FSLN. For example, Brody frequently displayed with pride a photograph that shows him embracing President Daniel Ortega. For further information on the Brody Report, see Jim Denton, "Contra Atrocities, or a Covert Propaganda War? A Lobby Drive Began in Managua," *Wall Street Journal*, April 23, 1985, p. 30; and "A Tainted Report?" *Time*, April 15, 1985, p. 69.

[10] By this time, some of the staff, including the executive director, had become totally disillusioned and gone into exile.

[11] See Shirley Christian, "A Human-Rights Panel for Every Occasion," *New York Times*, September 8, 1985, Section 4, p. 5; and George Gedda, "Nicaraguan Says Sandinistas Manipulated Rights Panel," *Associated Press*, August 21, 1985.

[12] See Chapter V.

III. The Instruments of Repression

A. The Legal System

Before seizing power in 1979, the revolutionary junta pledged that it would fully respect human rights. In its July 12, 1979, message to the OAS, it included a draft "bill of rights" enumerating a broad range of individual, civil, and political rights. This "Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans" was formally enacted by the junta on August 21, 1979, as Decree 52. Among its many provisions, the decree:

- continued the official ban on the death penalty and prohibited all forms of torture as well as cruel and degrading punishment. (The maximum punishment that can be prescribed under law is 30 years imprisonment.)
- outlined basic procedures for arrest and detention and specified the defendant's right to legal counsel.
- prohibited arbitrary government violation of an individual's person, home, or correspondence.
- guaranteed freedom of the press, of speech, and of religion.
- recognized freedom of association, including the right to form professional and trade union organizations and the right to strike.
- ensured the right to travel freely within the country and to enter and leave the country.[1]

The new government undertook numerous international obligations concerning human rights as well. On September 25, 1979, it ratified the American Convention on Human Rights. On March 12, 1980, it ratified the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol. Nicaragua also became a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International American Charter of Social Guarantees.

State of Emergency

Unfortunately, the laudable principles contained in the "Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans" and these international conventions have been largely ignored. The Sandinistas have taken repeated steps to erode the legal protection they were intended to provide. In September 1981, for example, they enacted the "Law of State of Economic and Social Emergency," Decree 812, which suspended the right to strike and limited freedom of the press.

The principal legal restriction on human and civil rights was the "Law of National Emergency," Decree 996, issued March 15, 1982, which formally suspended virtually all the provisions of the "Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans." Under this decree, prior censorship of all printed and broadcast material was instituted, the activities of opposition political, business, and labor organizations were constrained, and the prolonged detention of opponents—already a de facto practice—was legalized.

During the 1984 election campaign, the Sandinistas nominally restored some of these rights while keeping the State of Emergency in effect. In practice, however, many forms of repression continued. For example, freedom of the press continued to be abridged by censorship, freedom of assembly was rendered virtually meaningless as Sandinista "divine mobs" (*turbas divinas*) violently disrupted opposition rallies, and government actions and threats against trade unions had the effect of continuing the prohibition on strikes.

The expanded State of Emergency announced October 15, 1985, ended this legal facade of respect for human rights by once again formally suspending virtually all civil liberties. The many rights specifically abridged included freedom of the press; freedom of expression; the right of assembly; the inviolability of private documents and communications; the prohibition against arbitrary imprisonment except for certain cases specified by law; the presumption of innocence until proven guilty; the right to be informed of charges; the right to a fair and speedy trial; the right to trial by jury; the right to habeas corpus; freedom of movement and the right to choose one's place of residence; the right to enter and leave the country freely; the right to strike; the right of unions to form federations and national confederations; the right to found and advance popular, community, rural and other associations, unions, professional organizations; and the right to found and promote cooperatives.[2]

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[1] See Annex 18 for the full text of the statute.

[2] See "Nicaragua Suspends Rights," *Washington Post*, October 16, 1985, p. 29; "Civil rights suspended in Nicaragua," *USA Today*, October 16, 1985, p. 4; Dennis Volman, "Nicaraguan leader backtracks on many civil rights," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 17, 1985, p. 9; Stephen Kinzer, "Nicaraguans Split On Curbs' Effect," *New York Times*, October 17, 1985, p. A10; "Dictatorship in Nicaragua," *Chicago Tribune*, October 17, 1985, p. 20; and "Nicaragua Bares the Nightstick," *New York Times*, October 18, 1985, p. A30.

The international community reacted strongly to the October 15 decree. To mollify world opinion the Sandinistas revised slightly the provisions of the State of Emergency later in the month when it was formally approved by the National Assembly. However, these modifications restored only a few procedural rights such as habeas corpus in cases involving common criminals.[3]

With the imposition of the October 15 State of Emergency, there was no longer any doubt that Nicaragua had become a country without guarantees of basic human rights.

The Ministry of Interior

The Ministry of Interior (MINT)—the law enforcement/internal security arm of the Nicaraguan Government—is regarded as a component of the armed forces and, like the Sandinista People's Army, is under the tight control of the FSLN party. Sandinista National Directorate members Tomas Borge and Luis Carrion serve respectively as Interior Minister and First Vice Minister, and other key positions throughout the MINT are staffed by FSLN party members.

At the heart of the FSLN's system of repression and internal control is the MINT's General Directorate of State Security (DGSE), the Sandinista secret police. The DGSE has specific responsibility for all cases involving national security and counterrevolutionary activity. Led by Comandante Lenin Cerna, it is staffed by only the most trusted Sandinistas. The DGSE is modeled closely after Cuba's General Directorate of Intelligence (DGI). Hundreds of Cuban and Soviet advisers work closely with the DGSE, along with several East Germans and Bulgarians. The Soviets and their allies provide facilities, training, and equipment to the secret police, in addition to operational guidance. The DGSE is divided into numerous functional departments, e.g., F-1 (Operations), F-4 (Ideological Orientation), F-6 (Specialized Techniques), and F-8 (Mass Organizations). It has approximately 4,000 members, about ten times the number in Somoza's secret police.[4]

The DGSE may arrest suspected opponents and hold them indefinitely without charges. It operates nine known interrogation/detention facilities as well as a number of clandestine prisons.[5] The most notorious of these is the maximum security jail at El Chipote in downtown Managua. El Chipote, an interrogation and torture center during the Somoza dictatorship, now serves the same function for the Sandinistas. At El Chipote the secret police hold prisoners for extended periods—sometimes many months—in dark and cramped underground cells with minimal ventilation and no toilet facilities. The DGSE routinely subjects prisoners to psychological and physical abuse and summarily executes those considered most dangerous to the Sandinista regime. The DGSE regularly denies requests for access to or inspection of its prisons by outside groups, including local and international human rights organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross.[6]

The secret police work closely with other Sandinista groups, such as their "mass organizations" [described below], to infiltrate and keep watch on all levels of Nicaraguan society. The Sandinistas use their secret police network for surveillance and information gathering, as well as for special operations designed to entrap or compromise perceived opponents and to deceive visitors.

The MINT has jurisdiction over other organizations, including: the Sandinista Police, which performs conventional police duties; the National Penitentiary System, which runs prisons for all common criminals and some political prisoners; the Directorate of Communications Media, which administers censorship; and the Office of Immigration, which controls travel to and from Nicaragua.

The Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for monitoring the administration of justice within Nicaragua. It is also charged with supervising the Office of the Attorney General, which represents the state in trials, and is responsible for ensuring adherence to proper legal procedures with respect to the detention and release of prisoners. In practice, however, the ministry is a tool of the FSLN party; it often ignores the law and willfully collaborates in the violation of legal norms and the miscarriage of justice.

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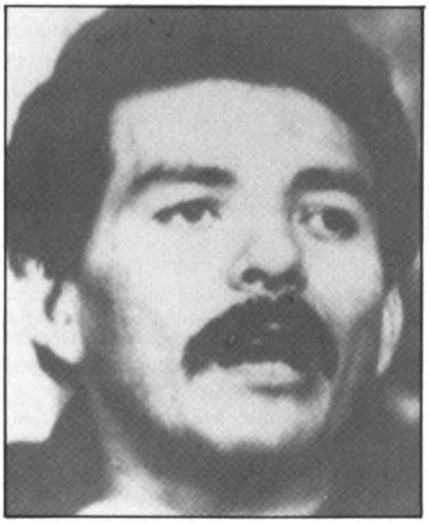
[3] See William R. Long, "Nicaragua Assembly Restores Some Suspended Legal Rights," *Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 1985, p. 5.

[4] See "Nicaragua's secret police . . . " *Foreign Report*, December 5, 1985, p. 1; and *Inside the Sandinista Regime: A Special Investigator's Perspective*, United States Department of State, February 1986.

[5] See Annex 14.

[6] The Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights, an American organization critical of U.S. policy toward Nicaragua, noted in its April 1985 report, *Nicaragua: Revolutionary Justice, A Report on Human Rights and the Judicial System*, that one staff member of the government-sponsored CNPPDH told the Committee that she had been extended a carte blanche invitation to visit DGSE detention facilities but that she had been too busy to avail herself of this opportunity. The Lawyers Committee reported that in denying its request to visit detainees in El Chipote, Interior Minister Tomas Borge had "explained" that the presence of strangers could interrupt the process of "interrogation and persuasion." See p. 105 of the report. On eight separate occasions, Americas Watch has requested permission to visit El Chipote, but the Sandinistas have consistently refused.

Minister of Interior Tomas Borge is directly responsible for many of the abuses committed by the Sandinistas. He oversees the secret police, the prison system, and censorship. In 1981, he issued the order to regularize political killings. Only Borge and First Vice Minister Luis Carrion are empowered to authorize "special measures," summary execution of political opponents. An avowed Marxist-Leninist, he is the sole surviving founder of the FSLN and a member of the National Directorate.



Lenin Cerna is the chief of the General Directorate of State Security (DGSE), the Sandinista secret police. (See Chapter IV and Annex 2 for an account of how Cerna personally beat the president of a Christian parents' association for publicly protesting the Sandinistas' Marxist educational program.)

The Regular Judiciary

The Nicaraguan judiciary is formed in a conventional hierarchy with local judges, regional appellate courts, and a Supreme Court of Justice. In theory, it is an autonomous branch of the government. Since 1979, however, the Sandinistas have politicized the judiciary and undermined its independence. This process has progressed very far, although it has not yet reached its culmination.

Because it was formed when the government was still composed of a broad national coalition, the judiciary initially included both Sandinista and non-Sandinista judges. The presence of these non-Sandinistas in the court system has been a continuing annoyance to the FSLN, and over the years the Sandinistas have taken measures to reduce the influence of such judges. For example, they have taken many types of cases, particularly those that are politically sensitive, out of the regular judicial system and placed them in special systems under their complete control. Also, they have gradually replaced many of the independent-minded judges with Sandinista loyalists and have compelled many of the remainder to succumb to FSLN political influence. There are still some judges who can and do act independently, but they generally are confined to handling civil cases of no importance to the FSLN.

The Supreme Court has at times been a difficult problem for the FSLN. In certain politically sensitive cases, the Supreme Court has issued rulings at odds with the Sandinistas' wishes. Often in such cases, the Sandinistas have ignored the Court's decisions. For example, they have kept prisoners under detention and refused to return confiscated property despite Supreme Court orders to do so.[7]

One well-known case in which the Sandinistas ignored a Supreme Court ruling is that of Bernardino Larios Montiel. Larios was a colonel in Somoza's National Guard who defected in 1978 and subsequently became the first Minister of Defense of the new revolutionary government. He was pushed aside in December 1979 and replaced by FSLN National Directorate member Humberto Ortega. In September 1980, Larios sent an open letter to Interior Minister Tomas Borge protesting Sandinista actions to implant Marxism-Leninism in Nicaragua. Larios was promptly arrested and accused of being involved in a conspiracy to assassinate the members of the National Directorate. The following month, he was convicted and sentenced to a lengthy prison term. He appealed his conviction, and in November 1983—after he had been held virtually incommunicado for over three years—the Supreme Court dismissed the case. Nevertheless, the Sandinistas refused to release Larios for months. In 1984, they permitted Larios to leave jail, but they then placed him under house arrest. The following year, Larios escaped to Costa Rica.[8]

The Special Tribunals

Shortly after the revolutionary junta took power, it established Special Tribunals to adjudicate the cases of some 6,000 persons categorized as being linked with *Somocismo*, including members of the defunct National Guard and many government officials. The Special Tribunals began operation in November 1979 and were dissolved in February 1981 after all cases had been processed. According to available Ministry of Justice statistics, 78% of those tried were convicted and received sentences of up to 30 years imprisonment.

In practice, the Special Tribunals amounted to little more than "kangaroo courts." The Special Tribunals were widely criticized by groups such as the International Commission of Jurists, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and Amnesty International because nonlawyer partisans—whose judgment could not be appealed—tried politically sensitive cases under expedited procedures without rules of evidence. In finding that the Special Tribunals violated the right to a fair trial as set forth in the American Convention on Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights held that the Special Tribunals subjected the accused

> to the legal judgment of people, some of whom at least, were not lawyers; to the judicial decision of people who were not judges; to the verdict of political enemies and to the judgment of people, influenced by the psychology of their victory, who were more inclined to be severe rather than fair. . . .
>
> In the opinion of the Commission, the operations of such tribunals gave rise to certain irregularities that were incompatible with Nicaragua's commitments under the American Convention on Human Rights. Of particular concern to the Commission have been the following: the accused['s] lack of opportunity to exercise his rights; the length of time the detainees were kept in detention before being brought to trial; the composition of the Special Tribunals; the vagueness and imprecision of many of the charges; the very short periods that accused were given to prepare their defense and to present evidence; the lack of basis for the judgments; the lack of jurisdiction of the

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[7] See Lawyers Committee *Report*, Section I (C) "Flouting Court Orders" (p. 26). Also, while the Lawyers Committee felt that recent improvement had been made in this area, it found that in some cases prisoners who had been ordered released remained in prison months and even years before the court order for their release was finally honored. It noted that this practice appeared to affect persons charged with ordinary crimes as well as security offenses, but that it occurred more frequently in politically sensitive cases. The Lawyers Committee also noted that Raul Cordon, head of the Penitentiary System, acknowledged to the Committee that the practice of post-sentence detention had not been simply a product of administrative oversight but rather a deliberate government policy (p. 125).

[8] See CPDH Special report "The Case of Bernardino Larios," January, 1984.

> Appeals Court to review the facts established by the Special Tribunals; the campaigns organized by the government or FSLN mass media against certain accused, when they appeared before the Special Tribunals (in violation of the principle of presumed innocence); and in summary, the discrimination practiced against all the "accused Somocists" by denying them certain minimum guarantees that, by their very nature, ought to be applicable to all inhabitants of the country, and which are expressly set forth in the Statute of Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans and in the American Convention on Human Rights.[9]

The People's Anti-Somocista Tribunals

Because the standard judiciary had a number of legal safeguards and independent judges who sometimes let opponents of the FSLN escape "revolutionary justice," the Sandinistas resurrected the tribunal system to ensure their complete control over such cases. In April 1983, the junta established the People's Anti-Somocista Tribunals (TPAs). Like the Special Tribunals that had preceded them, the TPAs operate outside the existing legal system. They are not bound by conventional legal rules and enjoy absolute discretion concerning the admissibility of evidence and the criteria needed to infer guilt. The TPA system consists of two panels that sit in Managua, both exercising national jurisdiction. One performs the initial adjudication of cases and the other acts as the appeals court. (Defendants tried by the TPAs are specifically barred from appealing to the Supreme Court.) Members of the TPAs are drawn from the ranks of the Sandinista Defense Committees and other FSLN "mass organizations"; the only official requirement is that the president of each tribunal be a lawyer or law student.

Ostensibly, the reason for the creation of the TPAs was to respond to the emergency situation caused by the growing armed resistance to the Sandinista regime. Their declared purpose was to expedite the adjudication of the cases of accused members of the resistance ("counterrevolutionaries" or "*Somocistas*" in FSLN parlance). Their jurisdiction was then expanded to include "a wider category and comprehends those who threatened the consolidation of the revolutionary process."[10]

By law, the TPAs have jurisdiction over persons charged with the following crimes:

- Acts designed to limit national independence or place the nation under partial or total foreign domination.
- Revelation of secrets concerning defense, foreign relations, or economic security.
- Damage to installations, roads, bridges . . . necessary for defense.
- Taking up of arms for the purpose of attacking the government or government officials or undertaking planning or acts leading to the taking up of arms for the same purpose.
- Impeding authorities from taking office or from freely carrying out their duties.
- Sabotage of centers of production, installations for public service, infrastructure, or public or private transportation.
- Conspiracy to do any of the above.

Persons accused of crimes such as speculation (selling goods for more than the official price), hoarding, economic sabotage, or spreading "reactionary" rumors may also be tried by the TPAs.

As noted, the purpose of the TPA system was to process cases quickly. In practice, however, TPA cases may take months or even years. There is no enforced time limit on the pre-trial investigative phase. While a defendant is in police investigative custody, he is normally held incommunicado: he has no access either to family or legal counsel. Only after the secret police have concluded their investigation and remanded a defendant to the custody of the TPA does that defendant have any access to legal counsel.[11]

When a defendant is turned over to the TPA, he is transferred from a top security prison (such as El Chipote, where he has been held incommunicado) to another facility such as the Zona Franca prison. The fact of this transfer may be communicated formally or informally (by the grapevine) to the defendant's family. This notification is often the first confirmation a family receives that one of its members is being held by the secret police. From that day forward, family members of the defendant customarily appear daily outside the TPA tribunal building hoping to catch a glimpse of the defendant as he is brought into court. Even if they are lucky and see the defendant, they may not communicate with him, since the defendant is not allowed to speak to anyone while in court except court personnel and his attorney. (Despite the Sandinistas' claim that TPA proceedings are open to the public, the only people normally allowed into the TPA court building are defendants, their attorneys, and court personnel.)

Family members form an important part of an informal notification system, for in many cases the defendant's counsei is never notified of any court proceedings. The counsel frequently rushes to court when the defendant's family members inform him that one of his clients has just been brought in. At best, the counsel has meager opportunity to prepare a proper defense. At worst (and frequently) the defendant is compelled to appear without benefit of his attorney. (TPA judges as well as secret police often purposely block the participation of defense counsel because the attorneys routinely advise their clients not to testify so as to place the burden of proof upon the prosecution.)

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[9] Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, *Report on the Situation of Human Rights in the Republic of Nicaragua, 1981*, pp. 90–93. See Lawyers Committee *Report*, pp. 33–40, for further information on the Special Tribunals.

[10] Many international organizations have expressed concern that these tribunals are used to jail political dissidents. See Lawyers Committee *Report*, pp. 51-53.

[11] The Lawyers Committee *Report* found significant reluctance on the part of some lawyers to represent defendants in the TPA system for fear that they themselves would be suspected of conspiring against the State (p. 68).

Considering the pro-FSLN orientation of the members of the TPAs and the procedures under which the tribunals operate, it is not surprising that nearly all defendants brought before them are convicted. (Frequently these convictions are based entirely upon statements given by the arresting police and "confessions" by defendants themselves extracted through coercive means.) According to the official Sandinista newspaper *Barricada*, by early August 1985 the TPAs had tried 910 defendants accused of being involved "directly or indirectly" in counterrevolutionary activities. Of those defendants whose cases had been heard, 531 received sentences ranging up to 30 years, and 201 were awaiting sentencing. Only 28 defendants (3%) had been acquitted, and 26 had been granted pardons. (The CPDH disputes these Sandinista figures, claiming that the number of people either convicted or awaiting trial is actually far higher.) Convicted prisoners may petition the Appellate TPA, but the fact that it rarely reverses convictions and may actually lengthen sentences imposed by the lower TPA discourages such appeals.[12]

Sandinista Police Courts

In 1980, the Sandinista Police were given authority to adjudicate cases involving cattle rustling, possession and distribution of drugs, and insult to authority. In 1984, these powers were expanded to include economic crimes such as "hoarding and speculation." By law, when the police arrest a suspect, they may detain him for one week before taking any action. The police then have the discretion to remand the defendant to ordinary court for prosecution or to impose administrative sentences of up to two years imprisonment.

During police court investigation and trial, defendants are denied basic due process protection, such as the right to legal counsel, habeas corpus, and the right to appeal sentences to an independent court in the regular judiciary system.[13] The Sandinistas have used the police courts to convict and imprison dissidents on trumped up charges for engaging in civic opposition political activities. For example, Amnesty International found that

> [in 1983] some local supporters of lawful opposition groups and independent community organizations were imprisoned without trial for six months or more, often being sentenced for alleged petty offenses by police magistrates . . . [one such defendant] was . . . sentenced . . . to six months' imprisonment, reportedly without having had access to a lawyer, and without having been formally informed of the precise charges against him.[14]

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights also reported that the Secretary General of the Social Christian Youth, Francisco Jose Rodriguez Guevara, was arrested in June 1982 for purely political reasons and in March 1983 was condemned by the police to serve two years in prison on trumped up narcotics charges.[15] Following international interest in his case, Rodriguez was released in November 1983.

In connection with the crimes of "hoarding and speculation," the police frequently conduct searches and seize evidence. The evidence seized often consists of items such as car parts or electronic equipment which in economically depressed Nicaragua are readily marketable. The police are authorized to seize all evidence that is directly connected to the case in question. There are frequent reports that institutional corruption occurs in these searches, however, with the police routinely seizing far more than the required evidence and taking whatever else in the defendant's home, business, or warehouse that attracts their attention.

B. Sandinista "Mass Organizations"

The FSLN's "mass organizations" work in combination with the official instruments of the government to broaden Sandinista control over Nicaraguan society and facilitate the gradual movement toward a one-party state. Each organization has a specific role in FSLN control of all aspects of Nicaraguan life.

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[12] William R. Long, "Contra Suspects Face 'Popular Justice': Nicaraguan Tribunals Accused of Ignoring Rules of Law," *Los Angeles Times*, December 25, 1985, p. 1, cites a typical TPA case:

> Rafael Saenz, 25, was held without charge for 4½ months by the State Security police. He was interrogated without having a lawyer present, and he was convicted on the basis of a confession that he swore he never made.

See also Edward Cody, "Nicaraguan Special Tribunals Said to Neglect Due Process," *Washington Post*, August 3, 1985, p. A1; Shirley Christian, "Nicaragua Police Criticized on Rights," *New York Times*, April 5, 1985, p. A7; and CPDH Special Report on Alejandro Pereira, March 12, 1984. For a comprehensive analysis of the TPA system, see Lawyers Committee *Report*, pp. 40–86.

[13] The Lawyers Committee *Report* concluded that the Sandinista Police Courts represented "a particularly disturbing assault on the right to be tried by an independent tribunal. The power entrusted to the police is subject to substantial abuse, and the lack of judicial review leaves defendants little hope of relief from improper detentions" (p. 10).

[14] Amnesty International Report for 1984, p. 181.

[15] IACHR, *Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Right: 1982-83*, pp. 15-16.

Sandinista Defense Committees

The most important of the Sandinista mass organizations is the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS), modeled after the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) in Cuba. This nationwide network of block or neighborhood committees has become a significant force for ideological indoctrination, economic and social control, and security enforcement at the neighborhood level.

The CDS are not technically a part of the government, but the FSLN has delegated to them a number of quasi-governmental responsibilities; thus, instruments of the FSLN party control access to important government services. For example, letters from the local CDS are needed to obtain certain government documents, and these letters may be denied to those considered "suspicious" or "counterrevolutionary." A person's ability to obtain free medical care (by law available to all) and even to hold a job may hinge upon relations with his or her CDS.

The CDS are responsible for the issuance of ration cards needed for the purchase of basic products such as rice, beans, and soap. In many areas, the CDS also distribute rationed goods. The CDS may deny ration cards to those whose loyalty is in question, either for acts of commission—such as criticizing the government—or for acts of omission—such as failing to show proper revolutionary zeal. Ration cards have at times been arbitrarily refused to those who fail to attend designated "political education" meetings on Sandinista ideology. In poorer neighborhoods in particular, the people are highly dependent for food and other essential goods on these ration cards; the ability to withhold ration cards gives the CDS powerful leverage.

The CDS also work closely with the secret police to create an effective intelligence system by providing a network of informers and serving as instruments of political intimidation. Interior Minister Borge has stressed the value of his network, proclaiming that the CDS serve as the "eyes and ears of the revolution." The CDS are in charge of "Revolutionary Vigilance," a program in which CDS members stand watch over their neighborhood during hours of darkness. Although the FSLN attempts to characterize the watchers as mere lookouts for subversives, thieves, or other "antisocial" elements, the constant presence of the FSLN's "eyes and ears" further inhibits critics of the Sandinista regime from meeting or from speaking out.

The CDS tolerate everyday grumbling about problems such as inflation, commodity scarcities, and unemployment. But individuals who criticize the "revolutionary process" or its leadership may be subject to pressure ranging from public ridicule and defacement of their homes by Sandinista mobs to loss of employment or food ration cards and even detention.[16] Virgilio Godoy, leader of the Independent Liberal Party and Minister of Labor from 1979 until 1984, described the situation:

> People are permitted to complain but they can't go any further than that. People worry that if they do anything, the army will take their son, or their business will be closed or some import will be confiscated. We cannot get people out of their houses to a rally because we cannot give them a guarantee that nothing will happen to them afterwards.[17]

While the Sandinistas have endeavored to develop the CDS system into an institution as strong as its Cuban model, in practice the CDS system is beset with problems. Corruption, favoritism, and excessive bureaucratization within the CDS have tarnished the public image. Wide variations exist in the level of activity of the individual CDS, usually reflecting the character of the local CDS leader. In many neighborhoods, the head of the CDS is the same person who had served as the local crony of the Somoza government before the revolution.[18] Many Nicaraguans resent the snooping of the CDS, the constant pressure to compel people to become involved in "revolutionary" activities, and CDS control over ration cards. To the maximum extent possible, these people avoid participating in CDS mobilization and ideological activities. Recognizing the seriousness of these problems and the growing popular disillusionment with the CDS, the FSLN announced in 1985 that it would take measures to revitalize the CDS system.[19]

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[16] Robert S. Greenberger and Sonia L. Nazario, "Sandinistas Stiffen Hold on Nicaragua," *Wall Street Journal*, March 15, 1984, p. 34; Kenneth Freed, "Sandinistas Build Their Power Block by Block: Committees Keep Eye on Neighborhoods," *Los Angeles Times*, August 8, 1983, p. 1; and Joanne Omang, "The Revolution Comes First. The Sandinistas are Allowing Nicaragua's Economy to Collapse," *Washington Post*, October 6, 1985, p. D1.

[17] "The shadow of dictatorship," *The Economist*, October 19, 1985, p. 50.

[18] Robert S. Leiken, "Nicaragua's Untold Stories: Sandinista corruption and violence breed bitter opposition," *The New Republic*, October 4, 1984, pp. 16–22.

[19] See Annex 15 for a CPDH report on the CDS.

In August 1984, the Sandinistas provoked a fight with members of the independent Confederation for Labor Unification (CUS). The government used the incident as a pretext for the Interior Ministry to temporarily occupy the CUS national headquarters. The tall youth at the far right of the lower picture is Cristobal Hernandez Castellon, chief of a section of the secret police's department F-8 (Mass Organizations) which directs the activities of the *turbas*.

Turbas Divinas—The Sandinista "Divine Mobs"

The atmosphere of intimidation is intensified by the *turbas divinas*, the Sandinista "divine mobs." These mobs are composed of the Sandinistas' most radicalized elements—drawn from the CDS and other FSLN organizations—and operate in conjunction with MINT Department F-8 (Mass Organizations).[20] They demonstrate in front of homes or offices of opposition figures, chanting slogans and threats, defacing the walls with pro-government graffiti, and frequently vandalizing the premises.[21] Although the Sandinistas control the mobs and select their targets, the government's official position is that these are "spontaneous" actions by the people for which the government is not responsible. Indeed, in defense of these mobs, President Daniel Ortega stated in September 1984: "We are not ashamed to be mobs because to be part of a mob is to be part of the people."[22] The government makes no effort to protect the victims of mob action, although police are often present. This adds to a generalized sense of fear, as the people realize that they have no defense against the *turbas*.[23]

The Sandinistas have employed the *turbas* selectively, and the intensity of *turba* activity has fluctuated over time. For example, they were used widely during the 1984 election campaign to disrupt opposition rallies.[24] More recently, the level of *turba* activity has been low. The suspension of civil liberties in particular has reduced the need to resort to the *turbas*.

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[20] See *Inside the Sandinista Regime.*

[21] For descriptions of *turba* attacks, see Robert J. McCartney, "Small Political Blocs Seek Changes: Nicaragua's Opposition Groups Brace for Tighter Restrictions on Dissent," *Washington Post*, October 1, 1983, p. A17; and Joanne Omang, "Left and Right Attack Church in Central America," *Washington Post*, November 8, 1983, p. A22.

[22] Stephen Kinzer, "Nicaraguans Say They Won't Delay Nov. 4 Elections," *New York Times*, September 24, 1984, p. A1.

[23] See Horacio Ruiz, "Lines, tanks and toy planes: The effect of the 'alert' on everyday life in Nicaragua," *World Paper*, December 1984, p. 6; and Robert S. Leiken and Eric Singer, "Shackling Nicaragua's People," *Miami Herald*, November 3, 1985, Section 6, p. 1.

[24] See Dennis Volman, "Cruz: 'Sandinistas must talk,' " *Christian Science Monitor*, August 17, 1984, p. 1.

Other Mass Organizations

In the labor field, the FSLN has founded two large confederations, the Sandinista Workers Central (CST) and the Rural Workers Association (ATC), and it dominates unions in important occupations such as education, journalism, and health care.[25] Artists, writers, and dancers are organized in the Sandinista Cultural Workers Association (ASTC). Its Nicaraguan Women's Association—Luisa Amanda Espinoza (AMNLAE), named after the first FSLN woman killed in combat in 1969, has taken over the women's movement, while several previously active women's groups such as the Association of Women Confronting the National Problem (AMPRONAC) have been suppressed. The FSLN has established the Sandinista Children's Association (ANS) for grade schoolers and the Sandinista Youth—July 19 (JS-19J) for those in their teens and twenties.[26]

The activities of the Sandinista Youth illustrate FSLN use of mass organizations. Sandinista Youth members may be called upon to form a *turba* to harass and intimidate dissenters. At school, they may demand the expulsion of "uncooperative" students and faculty. When they miss classes or neglect homework, they can insist on being excused on grounds that "revolutionary activities" take priority over school work.[27]

C. The Sandinista Armed Forces

A key element in the Sandinistas' plans to consolidate power has been the militarization of Nicaraguan society. In six years, they increased the size of their active duty military more than 12-fold—from some 5,000 in 1979 to more than 62,000 by 1985. In addition, they have roughly 60,000 in their reserve and militia forces. The Sandinistas thus have created the largest military in the region, and they have equipped it with an arsenal of Soviet tanks, artillery, and gunships without precedent in Central America.

This militarization and arms buildup were not the result of any threat facing Nicaragua. On the contrary, they were conceived and begun immediately after the revolution when the Sandinistas recognized that they faced no danger. At a secret strategy session in September 1979, the Sandinistas laid plans for a large, highly politicized army loyal "to the revolution and to the leadership of the historic vanguard: the FSLN."[28] Similar to the role assigned the "mass organizations," the Sandinistas intended to use the army as an instrument of social control and indoctrination. Their plans called for continual "political education" within the military using "militants of the vanguard with recognized revolutionary qualities." In practice, these FSLN "commissars" give regular classes on Sandinista ideology to recruits. The Sandinistas also planned to institute "mandatory military service" to ensure that large numbers of youth would be drawn into their army. Tens of thousands of Nicaraguans have had to serve in the Sandinista armed forces since compulsory "Patriotic Military Service" was enacted in 1983.[29] A large military also augments the ability of the secret police to intimidate and to crush internal opposition.

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[25] See Chapter VI.

[26] See Larry Rohter, "Sandinista Government Viewed As Leftist Hybrid," *New York Times*, March 23, 1985, p. A3.

[27] See Annex 16.

[28] *Analysis of the Situation and Tasks of the Sandinista People's Revolution*, dated October 5, 1979 (often referred to as "The 72-Hour Document"), was written as an internal FSLN party document intended for circulation only among party members. As such it provides a remarkable account of the Sandinistas' true objectives, including their plans to consolidate their power internally and their commitment to a worldwide communist revolution. For the full text of this report, see *"The 72-Hour Document": The Sandinista Blueprint for Constructing Communism in Nicaragua*, United States Department of State, February 1986.

[29] Mandatory conscription has been widely opposed in Nicaragua. Thousands of youths have fled into exile rather than serve in the Sandinista army, and there have been numerous antidraft protests. See June Carolyn Erlick, "Draft dodgers flee Nicaragua for Honduras," *Miami Herald*, January 4, 1985, p. 12; Stephen Kinzer, "Nicaragua Men Fleeing Draft Fill Honduran Refugee Camp," *New York Times*, April 11, 1985, p. A1; Edward Cody, "Nicaraguans Choosing Exile To Avoid Draft, Uncertainty: Flow Increases to Honduras, Costa Rica," *Washington Post*, April 12, 1985, p. A1; Stephen Kinzer, "Town Battles Military Draft In Nicaragua," *New York Times*, January 2, 1985, p. 9; Nancy Nusser, "Teen draft dodgers flee from fighting Nicaragua war," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 15, 1985, p. 1; John Lantigua, "Nicaragua Goes After Draft Resisters: Drive Sparks Disorders," *Washington Post*, January 18, 1985, p. A25; James Bock, "Military draft brings resistance in Nicaragua," *Baltimore Sun*, February 18, 1985, p. 1; and Robert J. McCartney, "Waiting in Honduras: Nicaraguans Fleeing War and Draft Form Support Base for Guerrillas," *Washington Post*, September 6, 1985, p. A1.

Shortly after the July 1979 revolution, the Sandinistas summarily executed hundreds of prisoners. The Permanent Commission on Human Rights (CPDH) strove unsuccessfully to prevent the mass execution of prisoners at the La Polvora prison in Granada. Here, CPDH officials accompany family members recovering victims of the "La Polvora massacre" from a common grave. (See Chapter IV and Annex 14.)

IV. Integrity of the Person

The "Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans" prohibits the death penalty as well as all forms of torture and physical abuse. The State of Emergency did not abolish these restrictions, although it did suspend other rights affecting the integrity of the person, such as protection from arbitrary arrest and right to a fair trial. In practice the Sandinistas have systematically violated all these rights.

A. Political Killings

The Sandinistas have acknowledged many summary executions in the months following the revolution, but they attribute the killings to a lack of central government authority over local rebel leaders, insisting that the problem was resolved once firm lines of control were established. While these executions may not have been ordered by Managua, the government did little to stop the killings or to punish those responsible.

The best known of these killings was a mass murder near the city of Granada during the final weeks of July 1979. Sandinista officials under the authority of Comandante Reinerio Ordonez Padilla summarily executed more than 80 people who were then buried in secret mass graves. The incident became known as the "La Polvora massacre," after the prison where those killed were initially detained. Before the killings, the CPDH received reports of a Sandinista plan to execute many prisoners there. It made frantic appeals to the government on behalf of the prisoners' relatives, but it was unable to prevent the illegal killings. Only after both the CPDH and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights leveled sharp formal complaints with the government was Comandante Ordonez arrested. Although solid evidence existed against him, Ordonez was never brought to trial. After 15 days' detention he was released by order of the FSLN National Directorate and sent out of the country, it is believed to Cuba. Ordonez later returned to Nicaragua and is now serving as an officer in the Ministry of Interior.[1]

Other similar incidents were reported throughout the country. A brief presented against Nicaragua before the Permanent Court of the Peoples in Brussels in 1984 noted:

> The evidence collected and the inspections show that this was the general situation throughout the country. In Leon, no fewer than 150 prisoners were executed, and in Carazo about 30, in Masaya more than a hundred were killed (some bodies were thrown into the crater of the Santiago volcano), whilst in Catarina (Masaya) 13 bodies were found in a single grave. Twenty-six people had been executed in Nueva Guinea and in Ciudad Dario (according to evidence provided by witnesses from the Sandinista army itself) hundreds of prisoners were killed. Dozens of victims were also reported in other towns in the departments of Matagalpa, Esteli and Rivas.[2]

Special Measures

The Sandinistas have institutionalized the summary execution of suspected enemies. They have taken great pains to conceal these atrocities, but recent revelations by former members of the Interior Ministry and the General Directorate of State Security (DGSE) have provided details of hundreds of political murders committed by the Sandinistas since July 1979.[3]

Immediately after the revolution and through mid-1981, assassinations of political opponents of the Sandinista regime were carried out in a mostly ad hoc manner with little systematic centralized control. The following are some cases in which senior Sandinista officials were directly involved:

- In late 1980, DGSE officers including Comandante Juan Jose Ubeda; Captain Oscar Loza, Chief of Department F-1 (Operations); and Lieutenant Raul Castro Gonzalez, chief of a section within Department F-1, were put in charge of the plan to assassinate Jorge Salazar, a prominent private sector leader and outspoken critic of Sandinista policies. The operation was carried

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[1] See CPDH Special Report "The Polvora Prisoners: What Happened to Them?" June 6, 1980, and Annex 13 for the IACHR findings on the "La Polvora massacre."

[2] *Dossier Nicaragua*, Number 2, January 14, 1985, a publication of the Europa-Nicaragua Committee, Brussels, Belgium, p. 10.

[3] See *Inside the Sandinista Regime: A Special Investigator's Perspective*, United States Department of State, February 1986, for a detailed report bv a former lieutenant who served from 1982 until 1985 as the chief investigator of the Interior Ministry's Special Investigations Commission. He researched cases of abuses that had attracted international attention, and the information he uncovered was used to concoct credible cover stories. He defected in July 1985, carrying with him official documents confirming his account. See also George Gedda, "Sandinistas Said To Have Killed Thousands," *Associated Press*, September 19, 1985; Charles R. Babcock, "Defector Assails Sandinistas on Human Rights: Drug Trafficking Alleged to Finance Intelligence and Espionage Network," *Washington Post*, September 19, 1985, p. A26; and "Sandinista Atrocities Charged by a Defector," *New York Times*, September 19, 1985, p. A6.

Jorge Salazar was a vice president of the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), Nicaragua's umbrella organization for the private sector. Salazar supported the Sandinistas during the revolution, but during 1980 became increasingly critical of their efforts to implant a Marxist-Leninist model. On November 17, 1980, the secret police murdered Salazar on the outskirts of Managua. (See Chapters IV and VI.)

out on November 17, 1980, on the outskirts of Managua. The DGSE agents fired several shots to make it appear that there had been an exchange of fire, and then put M-16 rifles into Salazar's vehicle so that they could assert that he had been transporting weapons. The Sandinistas have publicly admitted to killing Salazar, falsely claiming that he first had fired on security forces.[4]

- In 1981, the DGSE, under orders from Interior Minister Tomas Borge, assassinated a group of Nicaraguans who had taken asylum in the Guatemalan embassy. The DGSE planted a false asylee in the embassy who said that he had friends who were counterrevolutionaries preparing an escape plan for him. When the false asylee invited other asylees to join him, some accepted. The DGSE plant and the asylees he had tricked left the embassy and proceeded to a ranch in the foothills of the mountains near Managua. There the asylees were captured and assassinated by members of DGSE Department F-1 (Operations) under the command of Lieutenant Raul Castro Gonzalez.
- In mid-1981, eight prisoners in the Zona Franca Penitentiary were murdered following a disturbance. The eight had disarmed three prison guards and sparked an uprising in a prison building. After an exchange of gunfire between the guards and the prisoners, Borge persuaded the prisoners to give up their weapons and surrender by promising them their lives would not be endangered. As soon as the prisoners were back in their cells, Borge ordered the execution of the eight. DGSE Lieutenant Raul Castro Gonzalez took the eight men behind one of the prison blocks and machine-gunned them while Borge and Defense Minister Humberto Ortega Saavedra looked on. Later, the Ministry of Interior published an official communique which reported that the prisoners had been killed fighting during the riot.

In late 1981, Borge established strict high-level control over political killings. He issued a secret order that institutionalized the application of "special measures," i.e., the illegal execution of political enemies of the Sandinista regime and habitual criminals. This order, entitled "The Standardization of the Application of Special Measures against Elements of the Enemy Potential and Criminal Potential throughout the National Territory," states that "special measures" may be applied only with the approval of Borge or MINT First Vice Minister Luis Carrion.

The following are representative examples of "special measures" carried out by Ministry of Interior forces after the issuing of the order:

- In early December 1982, DGSE officers arrested 20-year-old Ramon Heberto Torrentes Molina in Chinandega because of allegations that he was recruiting for and serving as a courier for the armed opposition. Later, Comandante Guerrillero David Blanco Nunez, the MINT Delegate for Region II, asked Vice Minister Carrion for permission to apply "special measures" to Torrentes. Carrion approved the request and Lieutenants Banegas, DGSE operations chief in Region II, and Jose Maria Benavides, DGSE counterintelligence chief in Chinandega, carried out the sentence in a dry stream bed off the highway between Chinandega and Leon. The Ministry's official explanation was that Torrentes had been killed "while attempting to escape."
- In late 1983, an anti-FSLN guerrilla force ambushed a MINT special forces patrol in Jalapa in the northern department of Nueva Segovia, killing four of its members. Borge ordered the MINT's special forces to take strong reprisal measures against peasants in the area. Twelve people, including an evangelical minister named Alvarenga, were summarily executed in Las Uvas, Jalapa, as a result of those actions. In addition, the MINT forces arrested approximately 50 peasants and took them to the DGSE headquarters in Esteli. Ten of the prisoners were separated from the others and later taken to the special forces base on the Chiltepe peninsula near Managua where they were killed by order of Borge and secretly buried. The rest of the prisoners were later released in Esteli and Jalapa. Borge told the public that the ten who had been executed had been killed in combat.
- In February 1983, Pastor Cruz Herrera, a Nicaraguan farmer, was arrested by DGSE forces near the town of Pantasma, Jinotega. He was held for three days in Jinotega by order of First Lieutenant Mario Noguera, the DGSE counterintelligence commander, then transferred to the DGSE Operations Department prison in Las Tejas, Matagalpa. After being interrogated and tortured, Cruz was executed along with three other prisoners in April 1983. The execution was ordered by Sub-Comandante Javier Lopez Lowerli, the regional MINT Delegate, with the approval of Vice Minister Carrion.
- During 1983, the EPS and DGSE forces carried out a campaign to counter the effects of antigovernment guerrilla activities in the departments of Jinotega and Matagalpa. More than 300 farmers suspected of collaboration with the "counterrevolutionaries" were executed by DGSE personnel in the Cua, Pantasma, Waslala, and Rio Blanco areas. Local residents' demands for an investigation, translated into pressure from the CPDH and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, led Borge to order the creation of a special prosecutor's office for Region VI. However, this office brought charges against only four low ranking army and

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[4] See Chapter VI and *Inside the Sandinista Regime* for further information on the Salazar murder.

DGSE officers, and the four were freed shortly thereafter. The three regional chiefs principally responsible for the executions were quietly transferred to other regions.

- Early on the morning of July 20, 1983, DGSE officers captured Guillermo Lorio and his wife, Jamilett Sequeira de Lorio, at their home in San Miguelito, Rio San Juan, believing the couple to be the principal authors of "counterrevolutionary" campaigns in San Miguelito because they were the local coordinators of a religious movement called "Delegates of the Word." In the process, the DGSE disturbed the Lorios' three children who screamed so loudly they woke up a next-door neighbor, Luz, who left his house to see what was wrong. The MINT officers picked up Luz, since they did not want a witness, threw him and the Lorios into the back of a Construction Ministry truck they had requisitioned, and took them to an area called Los Pantanos, about five kilometers from San Miguelito. The DGSE officers tortured and interrogated the prisoners and raped the woman, finally slitting their throats with a bayonet. The DGSE officers then left but returned at 7 a.m. to bury the three bodies. They found Mrs. Lorio still alive, on her knees with a crucifix in her hand, trying to pray. One of the officers then killed her with three shots. (A 1983 report by the Catholic Church on Sandinista killings stated that a factor in these murders was Mrs. Lorio's refusal to be recruited as a DGSE agent.)

Additional Information on Killings

These startling revelations come as no surprise to the CPDH and other groups actively investigating the human rights situation in Nicaragua. In a May 12, 1984, letter to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the CPDH reported that from 1981 to 1984 it had received 97 complaints of killings attributable to Sandinista civilian or military authorities. (The commission estimates that this figure represents only a small percentage of the cases that occurred, since many people are afraid to come to the CPDH office to sign a formal complaint.) In each case, the death occurred shortly after the deceased had been detained by Sandinista officials who had fully identified themselves. In each case, the deceased "died trying to escape," or "died in combat with army troops," or "died of a heart attack" or under other suspicious circumstances.[5] The CPDH brought all of these cases to the attention of the appropriate authorities, but to date the commission has not received a single official explanation. The only responses to the CPDH or to the relatives of the victims have been threats against their lives for making inquiries into the cases.

Typical of the cases exposed by the CPDH is that of Nicolas Nelson Perez Aviles, a Managua taxi driver who died while in police custody. As his widow told the CPDH in June 1982, Perez had been a member of the Taxi Drivers' Union and had attended a union meeting at which Sandinista Comandante Bayardo Arce spoke. Perez booed something Arce said and was arrested that same night by the DGSE. After Perez had been held incommunicado for three days, the family learned from a television news program that he had been shot "while attempting to escape." When Perez's body was turned over to his relatives, it showed signs of torture from deep cuts in the shape of a crescent on his back and burns on his face.[6]

Another case documented by the CPDH is that of Jose Esteban Lazo Morales who died in November 1983 after being tortured by the Sandinistas. On the night of November 13, 1983, four members of the DGSE broke into Lazo Morales's house in the Chontales region. They called him a "Somocista beast" and, in front of his family and some neighbors, advised him to say a final good-bye because he would never see them again. They then took the struggling Esteban from his home. Three days later, at 3 a.m., State Security officials returned his body to his family in a sealed coffin, with orders to bury the body before sunrise without opening the coffin. Before burying the body, however, the family forced the coffin open. Inside they saw the results of torture, including a fractured nose, facial bruises, blood on the ears and head, extensive bruises on the lower abdomen, broken ribs, crushed genitals, and multiple stab wounds in the back. The family demanded an autopsy. The Sandinista forensic report claimed that Lazo Morales had injured himself when he fainted while in the custody of State Security in Juigalpa, and that the final cause of his death had been a heart attack. Sandinista military officials warned the family not to speak about or report the incident, but the family filed a formal report with the CPDH.[7]

The Catholic Church has also reported Sandinista killings. A November 1983 document signed by the then President of the Nicaraguan Bishop's Council, Bishop

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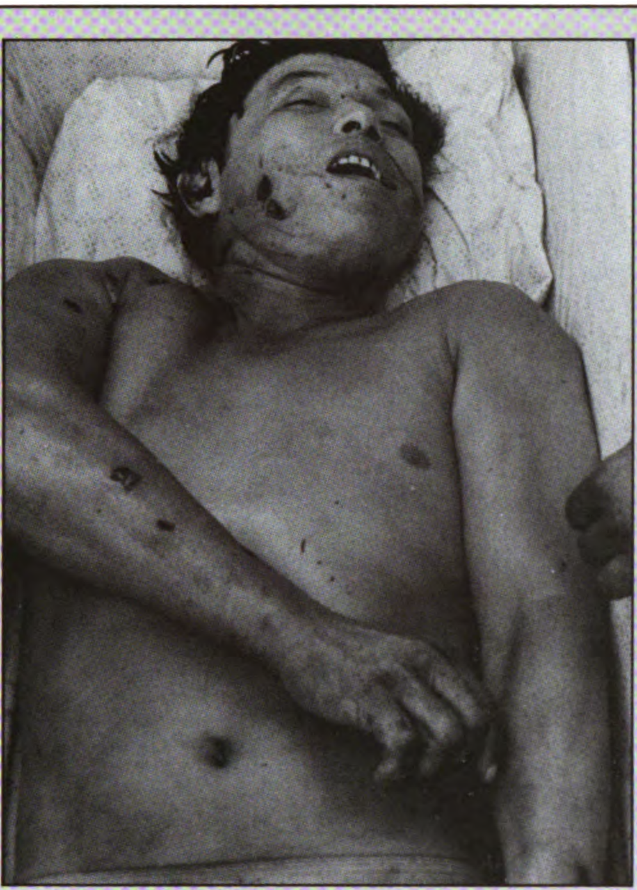
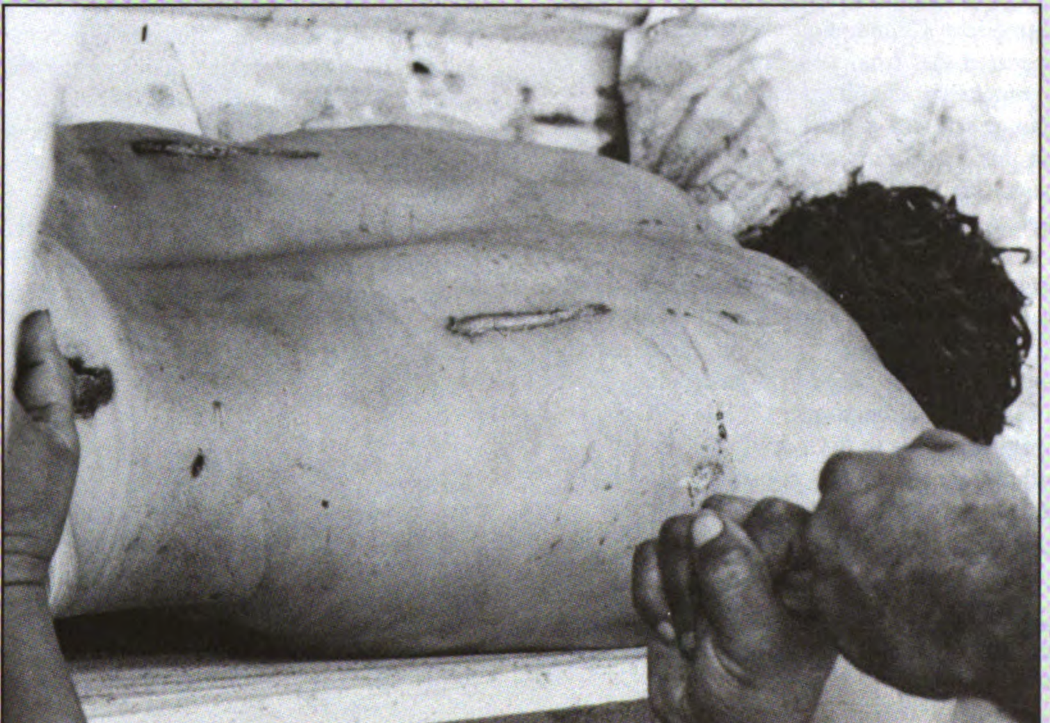
[5] Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua (CPDH), Letter to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, May 12, 1984, p. 2. See Annex 12.

[6] See Annex 13 for CPDH report "Unexplained Deaths," September 17, 1983. In July 1982, the CPDH issued a special report "Another Accused Dies Attempting To Escape" which contained photographs of Perez's battered body. Ministry of Interior officials called in CPDH National Coordinator Marta Patricia Baltodano and warned her never again to print any photographs in CPDH publications lest she and her staff suffer severe repercussions.

[7] See Annex 13 for CPDH report "Unexplained Deaths," September 17, 1983.



Nicolas Nelson Perez Aviles was murdered by the Sandinistas in June 1982. The Sandinistas claimed that Perez had been shot "while trying to escape," but his corpse showed signs of torture. When the CPDH published a report on the case, Ministry of Interior officials called in its national coordinator, Marta Patricia Baltodano, and ordered her never to print photographs in CPDH publications again.

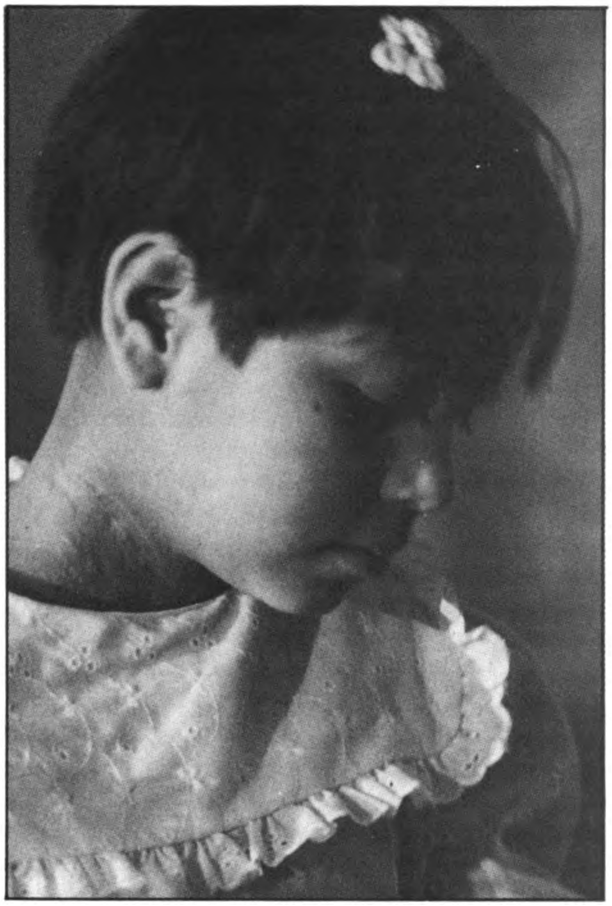


Pablo Antonio Vega, provided the names of lay Christian leaders killed by the Sandinistas. Examples cited in the report were:

- Alfonso Galiano: A lay leader from Las Pavas, Galiano was killed in his home by "burglars" who stole no property. Later they were found to be Sandinista militiamen, who, after being held briefly for the crime, were released and remain at liberty.
- Daniel Sierra: Charged with unspecified counterrevolutionary activity, Sierra was shot to death on the day before he was to be released. The Sandinistas alleged that Sierra somehow had smuggled a pistol into the jail and committed suicide.[8]

Foreign investigators also have uncovered murders committed by the Sandinistas. Fred Dicker, an American journalist, reported on March 15, 1985, Sandinista killings that occurred in the early 1980s. Among the incidents was a report by a farm worker, Rosendo Blandon Quinterro, from Jalapa in Nuevo Segovia. According to Blandon, the Sandinistas said: "Join with us or you will have no work." Blandon added: "They told the peasants that there is no God, that their weapon is God and the ammunition is the saint. Some peasants who resisted were killed. One of my friends was taken out and shot about 1,000 feet from his house. The Sandinistas wouldn't let his body be buried."[9]

A report by Wesley Smith and Richard Rygg, two Mormon missionaries who traveled extensively throughout Nicaragua, mentions other political killings.[10] Guadalupe Castellanos, a coffee worker, disagreed with a DGSE officer about liberation theology and revolutionary violence. Shortly afterward, she was beaten by Sandinista guards. She managed to break away from them, but they followed her and her children, lobbing a grenade at them. Her children, a 6-year-old boy and a 12-year-old boy, were killed, and she received severe back and arm wounds. The people of the nearby town of Dipilto, Nueva Segovia (where she lived), confirmed the incident, adding that for six days the Sandinistas had forbidden them to recover the children's bodies.



Martha Lidia Murillo Vallejo, 9 years old, also had her neck cut. Although she survived the Sandinistas' attack on her family, her mother, uncle, and six brothers and sisters were all killed by the Sandinistas in November 1984.

Another brutal incident involved the family of 9-year-old Martha Lidia Murillo Vallejo. In November 1984, Sandinista troops in Wiwili, Jinotega Department, shot and killed Martha's mother and six brothers and sisters. Martha was wounded in the leg. Her uncle, Jesus Murillo, attempted to take her to safety in Honduras, but they were intercepted by Sandinista soldiers at the border. The Sandinistas gunned down her uncle and hit Martha, finally cutting the back of her neck with a bayonet. Martha lost consciousness, and when she came to a few moments later, she saw the body of her uncle and screamed. The Sandinistas who were still nearby heard her scream and returned to finish killing her. They beat her in the head with the butt of a rifle, knocking her unconscious. Miraculously, Martha survived. Some hours later she regained consciousness and wandered until she reached the home of a Honduran who gave her shelter and contacted the Honduran authorities.[11]

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[8] U.S. Congress, Republican Study Committee, *Violence and Oppression in Nicaragua: Hearing Before the Task Force on Central America* (Washington, D.C.: The American Conservative Union, 1984), p. 93.

[9] Fred Dicker, "Villagers' Catalog Of Carnage," *New York Post*, March 15, 1985, p. 3.

[10] See "Nicaragua: A Report by Wesley R. Smith and Richard H. Rygg, in the *Congressional Record* of April 18, 1985, pp. H2213-18. pp. H2213-18.

[11] See Juan J. Walte, "Orphan describes Sandinista attack," *USA Today*, March 14, 1985, p. 1; and "Nicaraguan Family Brutally Murdered," *El Heraldo*, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, January 24, 1985.

B. Disappearances

Under Sandinista rule, large numbers of Nicaraguans "disappear" each year. Many, victims of political murders, are never located. Others are detained by the secret police and held incommunicado for extended periods without notification of family members.

In its May 12, 1984, letter to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the CPDH reported hundreds of cases of disappeared persons in 1979, 170 of which were then unsolved. Of 355 cases reported in 1980, 30 were unsolved. From 1981 to 1983, 433 new cases of disappearances were reported to the CPDH, of which 142 remained unsolved. Since submitting this letter in 1984, the CPDH has catalogued scores of additional cases, many of which remain unsolved. In virtually all cases, Sandinista officials were directly implicated.[12]

One well-documented case involves 17-year-old Ramon Ordonez Ramirez, a young peasant who was detained by State Security in 1984 for unknown reasons. The parents filed a complaint with the CPDH, which initiated an investigation into his whereabouts. The Sandinistas denied the boy was being detained, in spite of the existence of several reports to the CPDH from different prisons to which he had been transferred. In June 1984, the CPDH received a report from another prisoner that Ordonez was in El Chipote Prison, and very ill. The Sandinistas denied he was there. In August 1984, two prisoners at El Chipote got word out that they had evidence that Ordonez was being badly treated in the prison, and his condition had worsened. They reported that he was being confined in a small dark closet instead of a prison cell. He could barely speak; he had lost all his hair; his weight was down to 60 pounds. At this point, local non-Sandinista leaders wrote a letter requesting a pardon for him, stating that Mateo Guerrero, an official of the Sandinista-controlled CNPPDH, had admitted that Ordonez was imprisoned in El Chipote. Ordonez's name then appeared on a pardon list, but he was not in fact released. The CPDH filed a writ of habeas corpus, and a court appointed Guerrero to investigate. Guerrero, in the presence of two State Security agents, spoke to the prisoner who had seen Ordonez in El Chipote. This prisoner stated: "They can kill me if they want to, but I swear that I saw and spoke to this boy who told me his name was Ordonez; he told me where he lived and the names of his relatives." A hearing on the case was scheduled, but the judge, Maria G. Ruiz, was quickly transferred by the Sandinista government to Cuba. To date, no legal resolution of the case has been made, but Guerrero later defected—in large part because of his frustration in investigating the Ordonez case—and a former MINT officer has reported that Ordonez was a victim of special measures by order of Vice Minister Luis Carrion.[13]

The Sandinistas have a number of methods to sow confusion about the fate of the disappeared. For example, when they arrest suspected opponents, they regularly separate those who are believed to be the most dangerous from the others. If they conclude that these captives pose a serious threat, they summarily execute them. The other prisoners are sent to jail knowing nothing of the killings. Later, if important organizations such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights inquire into the case, the Sandinistas concoct false cover stories to explain the whereabouts of the murdered prisoners. For example, they may insist that the unaccounted individuals have been released and gone into exile or claim that they were "counterrevolutionaries" killed in combat.[14]

In other cases, the "disappeared" are not killed, but are victims of the Sandinista practice of confining suspected enemies incommunicado for long periods. A typical case is that of Ricardo Rodriguez Osorto, captured on October 26, 1984. After his arrest, he was transferred from one detention center to another by State Security agents who denied he was in their custody. He was finally found in the Zona Franca Prison after three months of constant searching by his relatives.

The CPDH holds that the disappearances involve "a deliberate policy of keeping prisoners incommunicado and at the mercy of their captors, undergoing all sorts of physical and psychological abuse."[15]

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[12] Statistics in the area of disappearances are difficult to express because the numbers are in constant flux; new cases are added while resolved cases are subtracted. Quite frequently, for example, a disappearance that occurred in 1983 will not be reported to CPDH until 1984 or even 1985 as the family's last resort. The CPDH attempts to collect data in two ways: first, a static year-end number is developed according to the year in which the abuse was reported; for instance, in 1984 a total of 73 cases of disappearances were reported, with these disappearances having occurred in any year between 1979 and the end of 1984. Secondly, a dynamic number is developed according to the year in which the disappearance actually occurred; for example, to date, a total of 60 cases of disappearance occurring in 1984 have been reported, of which 13 remain unsolved. This number can change daily as cases for that year continue to be reported or resolved. The resolution of a disappearance case means only that the person has been physically located; it does not necessarily mean that the person has been found alive or at liberty. Often, the resolution may disclose that the person has been killed or imprisoned.

[13] The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights held the Sandinista government responsible for the apparent death of Ordonez. See Annex 1 for further information on the Ordonez case.

[14] See *Inside the Sandinista Regime* for examples.

[15] CPDH 1984 Letter, see Annex 12.

C. Torture and Cruel and Degrading Treatment

In State Security prisons such as El Chipote, prisoners are regularly subjected to a variety of measures intended to intimidate and disorient them, and to weaken them both physically and mentally. For example, prisoners are routinely kept in dark, cold, and poorly ventilated cells, isolated for long periods, fed meals at irregular intervals, and forced to undergo grueling and threatening interrogations. Frequently they are stripped naked and forced to engage in humiliating acts. Women prisoners, for example, are often forced to exercise in front of laughing and jeering male guards and cameras; some have been raped by their guards, at least one after she had been drugged for an interrogation session, according to a confidential report filed with the CPDH. Some prisoners have been made to stand in barrels of cold water for several days. Often prisoners are beaten, and many have suffered broken bones and other severe injuries.

The CPDH and the Smith-Rygg Report described methods of torture that included sleep deprivation, deprivation of light, hanging by the wrists, beatings with boxing gloves and sticks wrapped in towels (to avoid marks), water torture (dripping of water on the head for prolonged periods), prolonged soaking in ice-cold water (usually followed by being forced to stand, soaking wet, for several hours), and imprisonment in cells too small to sit or stand.[16]

Deprival of food, water, or medication is a common punishment. For example, Jose Domingo Rivas Cruz, a 45-year-old farmer from the Rio San Juan department arrested in 1983, was deprived of food for 18 days while incarcerated at El Chipote.[17] Recalcitrant prisoners at the Zona Franca jail are thrown into the metal body of a junked truck and left for days in the tropical sun without food or water; when extracted, the prisoners are severely dehydrated. (The truck has been nicknamed "El Chupis," derived from the Spanish word for "suck," because of its ability to "suck" the water out of its victims.)[18]

The Sandinistas employ various forms of psychological torture as well. For example, prisoners forced to listen to screams of torture victims have been told that the screams came from family members. Others have been ordered to dig their own graves and then made to stand before mock firing squads.

Often, various forms of physical and psychological abuse are used to extract information. Torture and other lesser forms of abuse are also regularly used to obtain "confessions" from those accused of counterrevolutionary activity. Some examples are given in the Smith-Rygg Report:

- Pedro Ruiz Alfaro spoke of Cubans who held a gun to his head and demanded that he confess to being a "contra."
- Ismael Herrera described how he was held by his hair with a knife at his throat and an assault rifle in his kidneys and ordered to confess to aiding the "contras."[19]

The CPDH has determined that approximately 90 percent of those sentenced by the People's Anti-Somoza Tribunals were convicted on the basis of confessions they made while being held in State Security prisons. Almost all these "confessions" were obtained through torture or severe mistreatment. Lino Hernandez, National Coordinator of the CPDH, states:

> In principle every person who arrives at the State Security prisons is declared guilty. They have a method for each person. We have received testimonies of tortures that don't leave marks or scars.... We have received information that they use both physical and psychological torture.[20]

The case of Sofonias Cisneros exemplifies the direct complicity of high-level Sandinistas in the physical and psychological abuse of prisoners. On May 14, 1985, State Security Chief Lenin Cerna personally beat Cisneros in El Chipote prison. Cisneros, the president of a religious parents' organization, had publicly criticized on religious grounds the mandatory program of "Sandinista Patriotic Education" in private religious schools. Secret police agents took Cisneros from his home at night to the El Chipote prison. There, they stripped him naked and handcuffed his hands behind his back. Cerna then repeatedly kicked Cisneros, beat his head against the wall of the room, and put a pistol to his temple and shouted: "I am Comandante Lenin Cerna and you are a son-of-a-bitch who is going to die right here." After interrogating Cisneros about his opposition to the "Patriotic Education" plan, Cerna warned Cisneros that if he told anyone about the torture or interrogation, Cerna would kill him and his family "in the streets like dogs." Cerna warned Cisneros to leave the country or he would arrange to have him "liquidated." State Security agents then put Cisneros in a car, implying that they were taking him to be killed. Several hours after capturing Cisneros, the secret police finally released him, naked, on a

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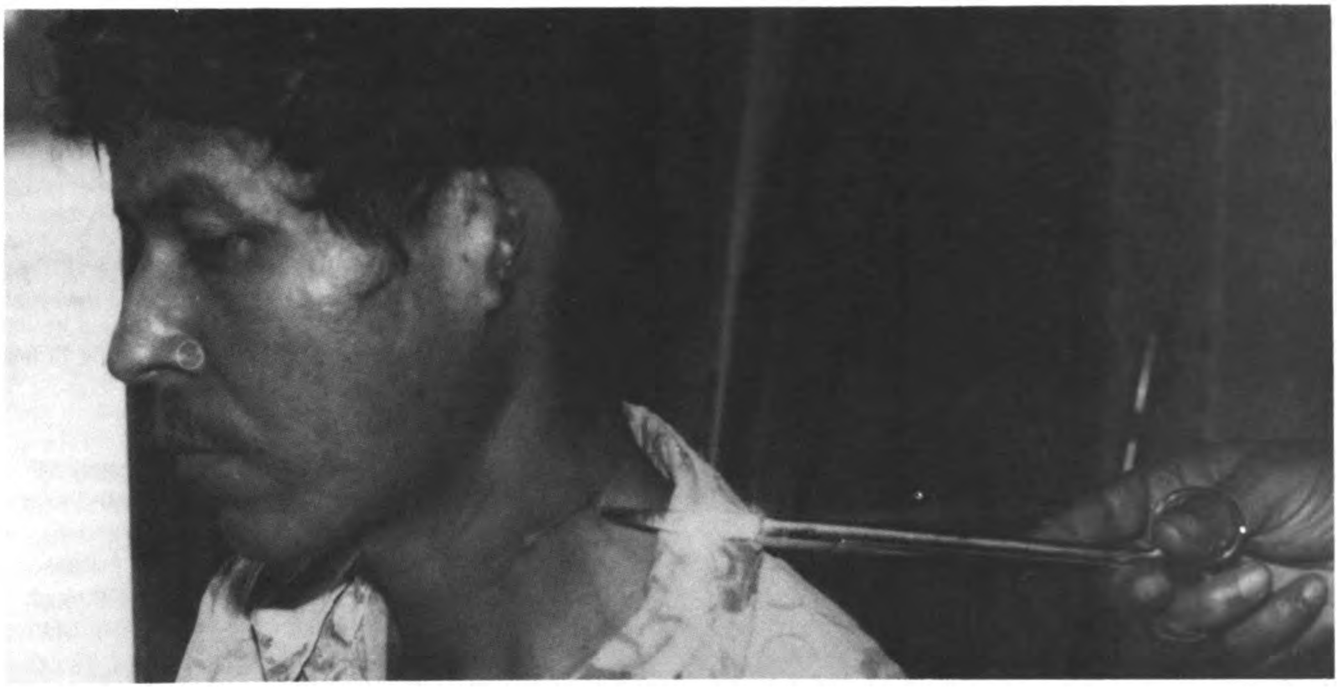
[16] See Annex 14 for a CPDH report on prisons. See also the Smith-Rygg Report, pp. H2214-15.

[17] CPDH Report, January 1985.

[18] See Annex 14 and *Inside the Sandinista Regime.*

[19] Smith-Rygg Report, pp. H2215-16.

[20] *Ibid.*



Prudencio Baltodano was captured by Sandinista soldiers in February 1984. The Sandinistas beat Baltodano, cut off his ears, and slit his throat with a bayonet. They left him for dead, but he lived to bear witness to their brutality.

main thoroughfare in Managua. For several weeks after the incident Cisneros remained in seclusion, refusing to talk to anyone. He then concluded that he "had nothing more to lose" by going to CPDH to file a complaint. Shortly after doing so, the windshield of his car, parked in front of his home, was bashed in (at the direction of State Security, he later learned). The Cisneros case has received significant international attention; President Ortega was forced to admit to the incident during a televised public meeting attended by international observers, but he rationalized that the "lesson" given Cisneros was justified.[21]

Another well-known case of physical torture is that of Prudencio Baltodano, who in February 1984, along with about forty women and children, fled the scene of a battle between Sandinista troops and a force of anti-government guerrillas. Baltodano and another man were separated from the main group and beaten by Sandinista soldiers. Upon learning of Baltodano's affiliation with the Unified Pentecostal Mission Church, the Sandinistas tied him to a tree and, after taunting him, struck his head with a rifle butt, cut off his ears, and cut his throat with a bayonet. Athough Baltodano was left to bleed to death, he survived and managed to escape to Costa Rica.[22]

The following are additional examples of Sandinista physical and psychological torture:

- In March 1984, the Sandinistas subjected Rogelio Benavides to prolonged soaking in cold water during two days of interrogation. He left prison with pneumonia.[23]
- During his imprisonment in 1983–84, Pedro Ruiz Alfaro was tortured for two days with injections of a "yellow fluid" that made him feel "like running, yelling, and crying" while the Sandinistas tape-recorded his reactions.[24]
- In 1983, State Security imprisoned Enrique Sotelo, a prominent lawyer and leading official of the Democratic Conservative Party. His guards deprived him of his glasses so that he could not read and then gave

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[21] Cisneros testified to CPDH that during his interrogation Cerna left the room, he thought at the time to receive a telephone call. Cisneros now believes that Cerna received orders from above that he was not to be killed because a foreign delegation had been notified of his detention and had immediately protested to a high Nicaraguan Government leader with whom they were meeting. See Annex 2 for further information on the Cisneros case.

[22] Sworn statement of Prudencio Baltodano, San Jose, Costa Rica, March 14, 1984. See also "Nicaraguan, in Washington, Says He Was Tortured By The Sandinistas," *New York Times*, April 24, 1984, p. A4.

[23] Smith-Rygg Report, H2215.

[24] *Ibid.*

him a newspaper which purportedly had a front-page account of his parents' deaths. Although his parents had not in fact died, he was told that his lack of cooperation with the Sandinistas had caused their deaths.

D. Arbitrary Arrest and Detention

The "Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans" prohibits arbitrary arrest and codifies numerous rights to protect individuals, including: the right to be released unless formally charged with a crime; the right to be informed of the reason for being arrested; the right to legal counsel; the right to a speedy trial; and the presumption of innocence.

The 1982 State of Emergency suspended these rights, leaving Nicaraguans with no legal protection against arbitrary arrest and detention. As part of their "relaxation" preceding the 1984 elections, the Sandinistas partially restored some of these rights in cases not involving "national security." The October 15, 1985, State of Emergency once again effectively lifted all legal restraints on arrest and detention, however. (The National Assembly's version of the Emergency Decree restored habeas corpus only in criminal—not political—cases.)

In fact, the suspension of rights merely legalized the Sandinistas' long-standing practice of arbitrary arrest. Many thousands of Nicaraguans have been detained on purely political grounds for periods ranging from a few hours to years. The objectives of this practice are to intimidate all potential opponents, isolate those believed most dangerous to the regime, and establish a climate of fear intended to stifle dissent.

Numerous political, private sector, labor, and church leaders as well as countless average citizens have been victims of arbitrary arrest, particularly since the October 15 State of Emergency.[25] Many are seized in the middle of the night by the secret police. Others are summoned to appear at "House 50" at the DGSE headquarters in Managua, adjacent to El Chipote. They are subjected to hours of intensive and abusive interrogation, often accompanied by the various forms of physical abuse previously described. Many are released after being detained anywhere from several hours to ten days. Some are coerced into signing false and incriminating statements. Others are set free without ever having been informed of the reason for their arrest. After their release, they and their families often receive death threats and visits from their interrogator "checking up" on them. In such cases, the Sandinistas' goal is to intimidate the detainee, to foster a feeling of helplessness, fear, and uncertainty which will lead him to refrain from any action that could bring further confinement.[26]

Those released are the lucky ones. Thousands of others have been kept in detention for extended periods. Some are eventually charged with a specific crime and remanded to the tribunals, while others remain in DGSE prisons indefinitely.

While the Sandinistas insist they hold no "political prisoners," they admit that about half of the 5,000–7,000 people acknowledged to be in Nicaraguan prisons are former National Guardsmen (sentenced by the Special Tribunals) or "counterrevolutionaries." The CPDH estimates that the Sandinistas actually hold some 7,500–10,000 political prisoners (including ex-Guardsmen); of this number, some 700–1,000 are confined at any one time in DGSE prisons "undergoing investigation."

One particularly odious Sandinista practice is the detention of family members. Often the secret police arrest family members of a perceived enemy and hold them hostage. This is particularly true in cases involving defectors who have escaped from Nicaragua and the grasp of the secret police. Well-known cases include that of MINT Lieutenant Alvaro Baldizon, whose wife and brother were arrested in July 1985 immediately after he fled into Honduras. His wife was later released and placed under house arrest. His brother remains in jail, and no one, including lawyers or relatives, has been able to visit him. The brother's only "crime" was that Baldizon defected.[27] Another case is that of State Security agent Ricardo Tiffer who defected in March 1985; his former DGSE colleagues promptly captured both his ex-wife, Xilena Pasquier de Tiffer, and his girlfriend, Ileana Artola Garcia, subjecting them to various forms of physical and psychological abuse and holding them at El Chipote until September. This practice of using family members as hostages serves as a powerful deterrent to anyone contemplating turning against the FSLN, since that person must consider that he would put his family as well as himself in jeopardy.

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[25] Edward Cody, "Sandinistas Interrogate Opponents: 300 Reportedly Held for Questioning," *Washington Post*, December 15, 1985, p. Al.

[26] See Annex 8 for a description of one prisoner's experience at El Chipote.

[27] While in New York on October 27, 1985, President Ortega falsely stated that Baldizon's brother had been set free. In fact, the brother remains in jail, after more than 7 months. According to a March 1985 Americas Watch report, Baldizon's brother had been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.

A highly publicized arrest case was that of Jose Manuel Urbina Lara, who had sought political asylum in the Costa Rican Embassy in Managua. On December 24, 1984, DGSE agents forcibly removed him from the embassy, shooting him in the leg in the process. On January 4, 1985, he appeared at a press conference, evidently under coercion, to deny that his removal from the embassy was by force. His father interrupted the press conference to say that this was untrue, at which point the press conference participants were told to leave. The son then told his father that he appeared under threat of having his leg wound remain untreated and being confined in a dark cell. Urbina Lara remained in State Security custody until international public opinion and diplomatic pressure convinced the Sandinistas to allow him to leave Nicaragua.[28]

In February 1985, the secret police detained Roger Guevara Mena, a lawyer, a prominent member of the Social Christian Party, and head of the Nicaraguan Boy Scouts. The previous year Guevara had ably defended Father Luis Amado Pena, a Catholic priest the Sandinistas had accused of subversive activity. The DGSE agents interrogated Guevara about reports (which were incorrect) that he was serving as a legal adviser for Urbina Lara. Guevara was held incommunicado in El Chipote for nine days, losing 10 pounds during the ordeal. When his arrest attracted international attention, the Sandinistas released Guevara.[29]

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[28] For information on the Urbina Lara case and how his detention disrupted the Contadora Peace Process, see Richard J. Meislin, "Latin Peace Group Cancels Meeting," *New York Times*, February 14, 1985, p. All; Joel Brinkley, "Nicaraguan Says Reagan Threats Killed Peace Bid," *New York Times*, February 26, 1985, p. A6; Alan Riding, "New Peace Effort By Latin Nations Backed by Shultz," *New York Times*, March 3, 1985, p. Al; and "Nicaragua Frees Man It Arrested at Embassy," *New York Times*, March 6, 1985, p. A10.

[29] See John Lantigua, "Opposition Lawyer Held In Nicaragua," *Washington Post*, February 10, 1985, p. A27.

V. Basic Civil Rights

A. Freedom of Information

The "Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans" proclaims that "freedom of information is one of the fundamental principles of authentic democracy." However, this right has been among those most consistently violated by the FSLN. From July 1979, the Sandinistas have taken steps to ensure that the Nicaraguan people can receive only the information the Sandinistas themselves provide. Since March 1982, freedom of the press has not existed even in theory.

Immediately following the revolution, the Sandinistas acquired control of much of the electronic and print media:

- by taking over the nation's two television stations and incorporating them into the Sandinista Television System. (As part of their efforts to project a positive image internationally during the 1984 election campaign, the Sandinistas transferred control of the television system from the FSLN party to the government, although this change had no impact on its propaganda-loaded programming.)
- by taking over a number of radio stations, the most popular means of communication in Nicaragua. In the succeeding years, they either shut down or gained control of most of the country's independent radio stations. The Catholic Church's *Radio Catolica* was the latest to be forced off the air; it was ordered closed on January 1, 1986, after a continuing pattern of harassment. Currently, the FSLN's *Radio Sandino* and the government's *The Voice of Nicaragua* (*La Voz de Nicaragua*) and their nationwide network of affiliates control some 20 of the approximately 41 stations in the country. Nearly all the remaining independent stations have been intimidated into either following the Sandinista party line or dropping information programs and limiting their broadcasting to music. The surviving independent radio stations are subject to strict prior censorship and must air Sandinista propaganda portrayed as "public service" programs.[1]
- by expropriating for their own party's use the printing press of the defunct Somoza newspaper *Novedades* and using it to publish their official organ *Barricada*. A second pro-Sandinista newspaper, *El Nuevo Diario*, was founded the following spring.

As noted above, freedom of the press initially was protected by the "Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans." The only legal restrictions were non-controversial prohibitions—on subjects such as pornography, advertisements of alcoholic beverages, and sexual exploitation of women—which were in keeping with the moral tone of the revolution. Later, politically motivated restrictions were enacted involving national security and economic matters, subject to broad interpretation by the Sandinistas.

On March 15, 1982, freedom of information was officially suspended by the State of Emergency. The government imposed prior censorship of all electronic and print media material, and the Directorate of Communications Media within Tomas Borge's Interior Ministry was charged with running the censorship program. One effect of the State of Emergency was to silence non-FSLN radio news broadcasts; preparing transcripts to be cleared by the censorship office ensured that even an approved story could not be aired in time to be newsworthy.[2] The most challenging target of censorship, however, was *La Prensa*.

La Prensa

The newspaper *La Prensa* holds a special place of honor in the Nicaraguan revolution. For decades, the paper was a relentless critic of the Somoza regime. It became a symbol of resistance to Somoza, and both *La Prensa* and its editor Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Cardenal suffered repeatedly from Somoza's repression and censorship. The assassination of Chamorro in January 1978 sparked the revolution that ultimately put the Sandinistas in power.[3] One of the Somoza regime's final acts was to destroy *La Prensa*'s printing facilities.

Following the revolution, *La Prensa* reopened and was able to provide the Nicaraguan people with news, free of government censors. However, *La Prensa*'s continuing endorsement of democratic values soon led to

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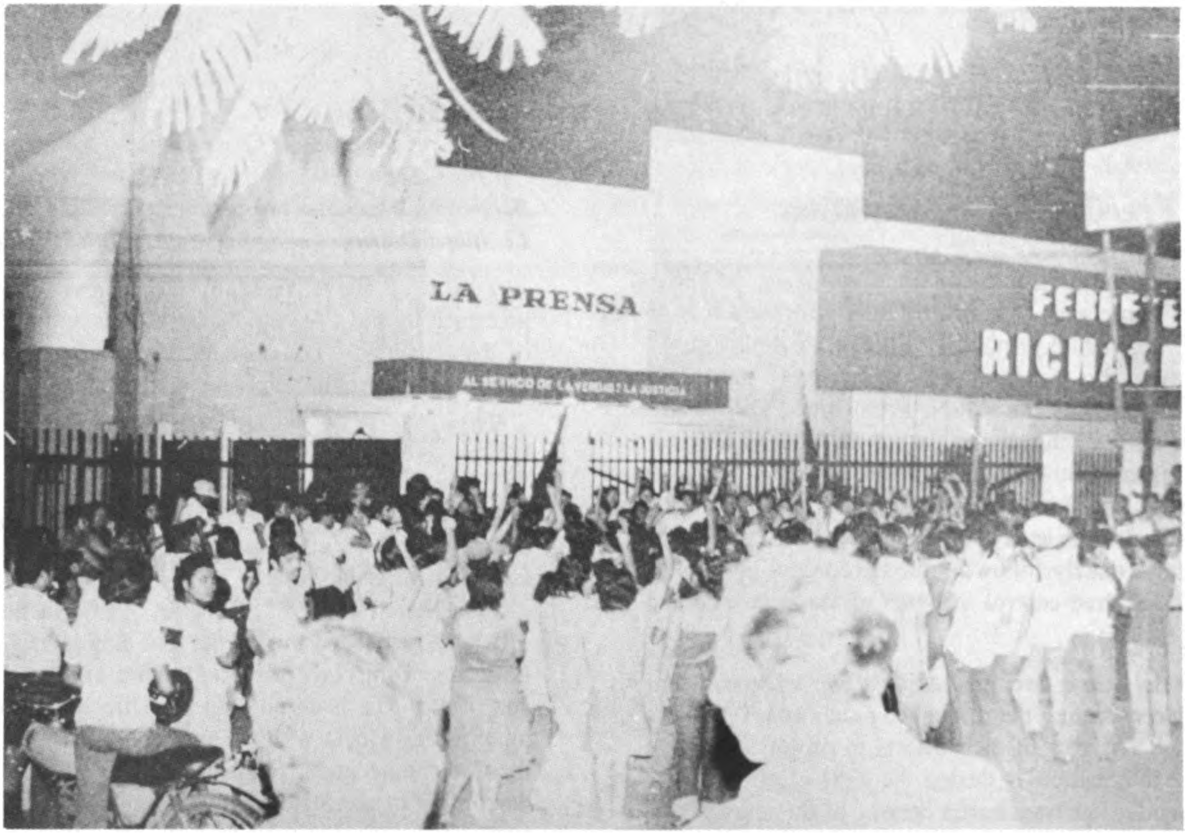
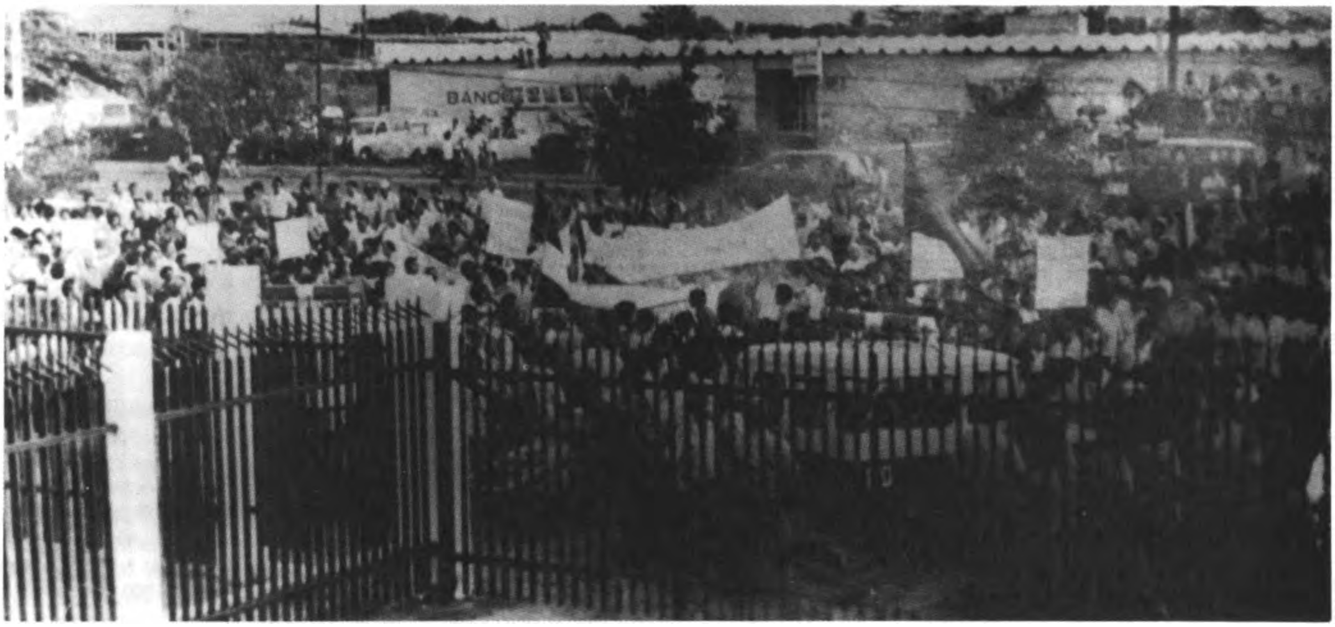
[1] See "The Sandinists Silence Radio News Program," *New York Times*, January 22, 1982, p. 6; and Stephen Kinzer, "Sandinista Ban on Church Radio Seems To Be In Step With Drive On Press," *New York Times*, January 4, 1986, Section 1, p. 1.

[2] See "Managua Suspends Individual Rights," *Associated Press*, March 16, 1982; and Karen DeYoung, "Nicaragua Sets State of Emergency," *Washington Post*, March 16, 1982, p. A1.

[3] Chamorro's widow, Violeta de Chamorro, was a member of the original five-member junta. She resigned in April 1980 and has become a vocal critic of the Sandinista regime.


LA PRENSA
AL SERVICIO DE LA VERDAD Y LA JUSTICIA
FERRETE
RICHAR

The independent newspaper *La Prensa* is the only source of non-FSLN information for many Nicaraguans. The Sandinistas muzzle *La Prensa* through censorship and have repeatedly unleashed their *turbas divinas* (divine mobs) against *La Prensa* and its publishers and reporters.



open confrontation with the Sandinistas. Recognizing that it would be politically costly to close *La Prensa* outright, the Sandinistas sought instead to muzzle it through heavy censorship.

Every morning, *La Prensa's* editors submitted a dummy of the day's edition to the censorship office. Normally, the censors prohibited a half dozen or more stories each day. In addition, they forced *La Prensa* to revise numerous other articles before publishing them. Sometimes the censors demanded major changes such as retitling an article and rewriting or dropping entire paragraphs. At other times, their demands were more subtle: for example, they routinely insisted that any report—including stories from the major international wire services—using the term "anti-Sandinistas" must be modified and that the loaded word "counterrevolutionaries" be substituted. The Sandinistas asserted that censorship was only applied in matters of national security. In fact, *La Prensa*'s files contain thousands of censored articles on domestic political and economic matters, human rights, church issues, and international relations that in no way relate to national security. Instead, the censored articles demonstrate conclusively that the Sandinistas use censorship not to protect Nicaragua but rather to further their own partisan political interests.[4]

Often censorship was so heavy—some 80–90% of the day's hard news stories—or the notification by the censorship office was delayed so long that *La Prensa* was unable to make its afternoon deadline. (The Sandinistas forbade *La Prensa* to print blank spaces showing where an article had been censored, so the editors prepared "filler" items to occupy the places intended for the prohibited stories.) On dozens of occasions, to protest excessive censorship or the banning of a particularly important article, *La Prensa's* editors did not publish. In August 1982, for example, *La Prensa* refused to publish when the Sandinistas censored a letter from Pope John Paul II to the Nicaraguan bishops supporting the principle of unity within the Catholic Church and criticizing the Sandinista "Popular Church." On numerous other occasions, the Sandinistas ordered *La Prensa* closed temporarily.

Following the October 15, 1985, expansion of the State of Emergency, the Sandinistas took further measures against *La Prensa*.[5] On November 27, the head of the censorship office notified *La Prensa* that it was prohibited from making any distribution of the articles the censors had banned. (Prior to this time, *La Prensa* had provided copies of such articles to visitors, press correspondents, and diplomatic missions to show the extent of the Sandinistas' censorship. The articles also demonstrated that censorship was not restricted to matters of national security but was instead part of the FSLN's effort to totally manage the information available to the Nicaraguan people.)[6] A Sandinista official warned that the members of *La Prensa*'s editorial board would be held personally responsible for any future dissemination of censored articles and threatened that "the next violation will be rigorously sanctioned." *La Prensa*'s statement protesting this further infringement was itself censored, and the Sandinistas shut down the paper from December 7 through December 9 because *La Prensa* provided copies of this statement to foreign journalists.[7]

In addition to preventing unwanted information from reaching the Nicaraguan public and making it more difficult for news about events occurring inside Nicaragua to reach the international press, censorship also served the Sandinistas' efforts to cripple *La Prensa* economically. By regularly deleting the most newsworthy stories, the censors left the gutted *La Prensa* pages with only bland "fillers." By delaying notification of which articles could be printed, the censors prevented *La Prensa* from hitting the streets until well after the afternoon rush hour. These two factors cut into *La Prensa*,circulation, thereby reducing its revenue. Any day *La Prensa* did not publish because of heavy censorship or government order resulted in a major loss of income.

The government also put economic pressure on *La Prensa* by setting limits on the number of pages any Nicaraguan newspaper may have. While this had little impact on the Sandinista newspapers, which are heavily subsidized by the government, it has seriously impaired *La Prensa*'s ability to generate income through advertising. Moreover, the Sandinistas limited *La Prensa's* access to newsprint, repeatedly bringing it to the point of ceasing publication because of lack of paper. They also resorted to the use of strong-arm tactics to coerce local distributors not to sell *La Prensa*.[8]

Other Sandinista actions against *La Prensa* include the arrest and detention for lengthy periods on trumped up charges of *La Prensa* reporters and photographers. Also, the Sandinista press and electronic media repeatedly launched vicious attacks on *La Prensa's* publishers—attacks which the Sandinista censors ensured went unanswered.

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[4] See Annex 6 for descriptions of censored articles. See also Edward Cody, "Young Lawyer Decides What's Fit To Print in Nicaragua," *Washington Post*, December 25, 1982, p. A15; and "*La Prensa* censored again," *Washington Times*, April 11, 1985, p. 5A.

[5] See Stephen Kinzer, "In Nicaragua, Rights Curbs Bring Uncertainty and More Censorship," *New York Times*, October 24, 1985, p. A1.

[6] See Joanne Omang, "Censored News Closely Read: *La Prensa* Delivers What Managua's Censor Trims," *Washington Post*, September 24, 1985, p. A17.

[7] See Juan Maltes, "Sandinistas Intensify Censorship After Emergency Declared," *Associated Press*, December 7, 1985; Tracy Wilkinson, "Nicaragua Suspends Publication of Only Opposition Newspaper," *United Press International*, December 7, 1985; and "Nicaragua: Unhappy New Year," *The Economist*, December 21, 1985, p. 29.

[8] Roger Fontaine, "Nicaraguan editor charges press is muzzled," *Washington Times*, November 23, 1984, p. 1.

At the end of 1984, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Barrios, co-director of *La Prensa* and son of its martyred editor, went into exile and began a small publication entitled *Nicaragua Today (Nicaragua Hoy)* in Costa Rica, free of Sandinista censors.[9]

Despite continuous harassment and censorship, *La Prensa* carried on the struggle for freedom, just as it had for decades under Somoza. Finally, on June 26, 1986, the Sandinistas decided that they could no longer tolerate even a muzzled free press; they ordered *La Prensa* closed indefinitely.

Other Restrictions on Information

The Sandinistas' control over the flow of information in Nicaragua is not confined to the media and press. Groups including political parties, labor organizations, the church, and the CPDH repeatedly have suffered Sandinista interference in the dissemination of their newsletters and reports. In October 1985, the Directorate of Communications Media implemented new procedures which further restricted the dissemination of such publications. While a few private publications still survive, others such as the monthly newsletter of the Nicaraguan Conservative Party, the newsletter of the Catholic Church, the bulletin of the independent Confederation for Labor Unification (CUS), and the one-page daily political bulletin "Prisma" have all been ordered closed as part of the Sandinistas' latest crackdown.[10]

Western newspapers and news magazines are almost nonexistent in Nicaragua, and copies brought in by visitors or returning Nicaraguans often are seized by Sandinista authorities at ports of entry. Books printed in the West are scarce, while the shelves of bookstores are filled with materials from Cuba, the Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe that glorify the Sandinistas and extol the virtues of Marxism. The textbooks and other teaching materials used in Nicaraguan schools are skillfully written to inculcate Marxist values and ideology, and books with alternative interpretations of history and economics are suppressed.[11]

Motion pictures brought into the country must be reviewed by an office of the Ministry of Culture to ensure their ideological correctness before they are shown to the public.[12]

In sum, the Sandinistas have efficiently isolated Nicaragua from the West, ensuring that the only information available to the average citizen conforms to the Sandinistas' own Marxist view of the world.

B. Freedom of Religion

Some 80–85 percent of the Nicaraguan people belong to the Catholic Church. Many of the remainder are members of various Protestant Churches. This religious character of the people has posed a serious dilemma to the Sandinistas, whose Marxist ideology is fundamentally atheistic. As the Sandinistas have worked to transform Nicaragua into a Marxist-Leninist state, they have come into conflict with the church over issues such as civil rights and the use of the educational system to indoctrinate the youth. They have sought to repress and weaken the traditional church while coopting religious leaders wherever possible and integrating them into their own so-called "Popular Church."

The Catholic Church

The Catholic Church is the strongest non-Sandinista institution in post-revolutionary Nicaragua. As such, it stands as a potential rival center of power to the FSLN and an obstacle to the Sandinistas' efforts to consolidate their power.

The church was an important moral force behind the 1979 revolution. During the 1970s, under the leadership of then Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo, the church became increasingly outspoken in its criticism of the Somoza regime. It called for political, economic, and social reforms which would lead to true democracy, social justice, and observance of human rights. The Sandinistas applauded the position of the church. They called upon Obando to be the mediator during a major hostage incident in 1974 and again during their seizure of the National Palace in 1978. Obando personally intervened to protect Sandinista leaders captured by Somoza, and some of the *comandantes* owe their lives to the Archbishop's intercession on their behalf. As the situation in Nicaragua deteriorated in 1978–79, the church sided clearly with the cause of the revolution.[13]

While the church was concerned by the Marxist orientation of the FSLN, it was prepared to work with the new coalition government to realize the revolution's declared goals. Shortly after the fall of Somoza, the

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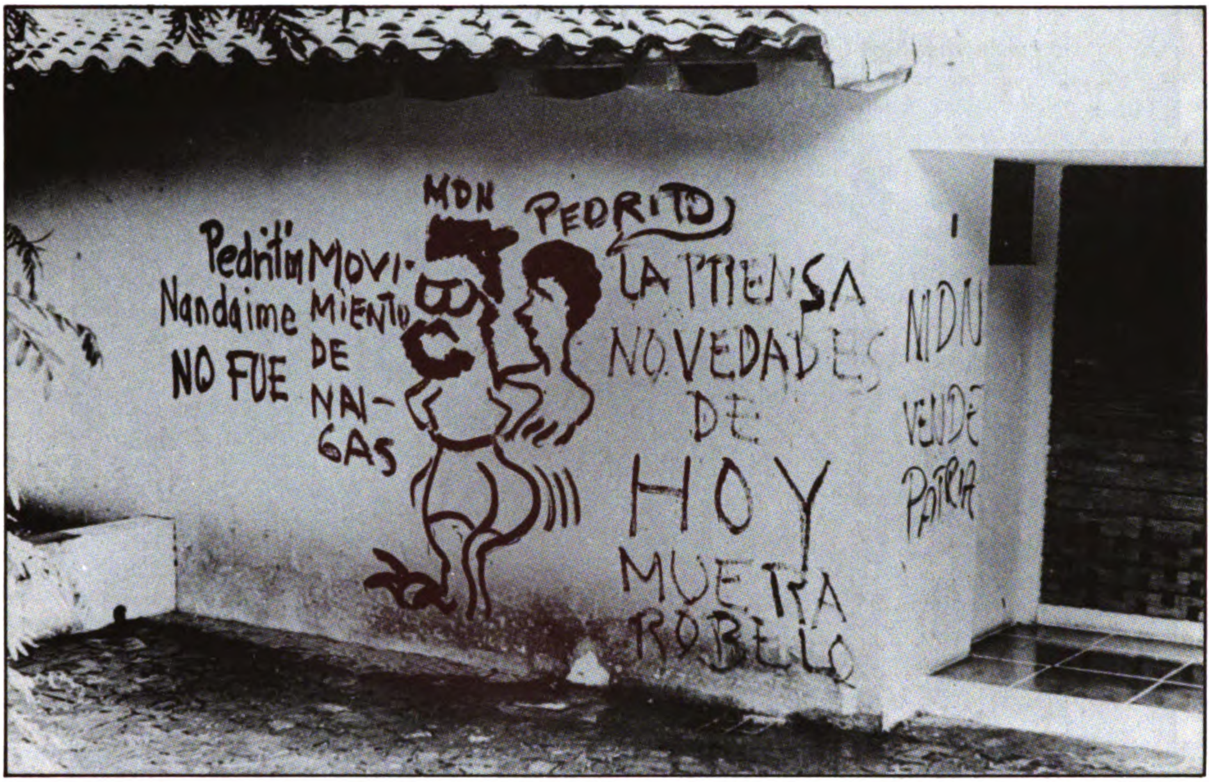
[9] "Censorship and the world's press," *Editor and Publisher*, November 3, 1984, p. 40; see also Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, "Nicaragua: An Editor's Exile" (interview), *World Press Review*, February 1985, pp. 33–35. See Annex 6 for further information on *La Prensa*.

[10] See Stephen Kinzer, "Nicaragua Said to Order Censorship of Rights Unit," *New York Times*, November 22, 1985, p. A9.

[11] See David N. Dorn and Xavier Zavala Cuadra, "Schoolbooks, Sandinista-Style: Let's See, If You Divide 6 Marxist-Leninists by 3 Grenades . . ." *Washington Post*, August 18, 1985, p. B5.

[12] See William R. Long, "But is it Art? Nicaraguans Well Versed in Politics," *Los Angeles Times*, July 21, 1985, p. A1.

[13] See Stephen Kinzer, "Nicaragua's Combative Archbishop," *New York Times Magazine*, November 18, 1984, p. 75; and Mario Vargas Llosa, "In Nicaragua," *New York Times Magazine*, April 29, 1985, p. 37.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MUETTA
ROBELO
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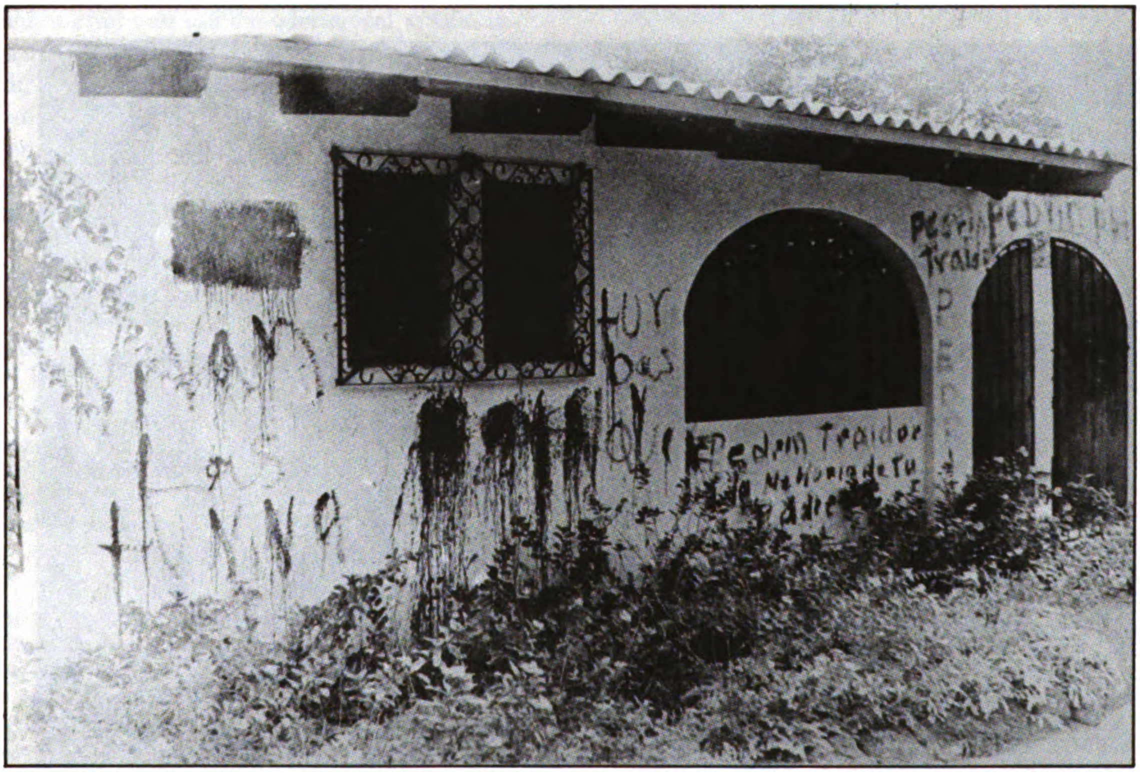
VENDE
PATRIA

The home of Violeta de Chamorro, widow of assassinated *La Prensa* editor Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Cardenal, has been defaced by the Sandinista *turbas*. Mrs. Chamorro was a member of the original revolutionary junta but resigned in April 1980 when the Sandinistas stacked the quasi-legislative Council of State. (See Annex 6 for a 1982 letter by Mrs. Chamorro on Sandinista censorship.)


Pedrito
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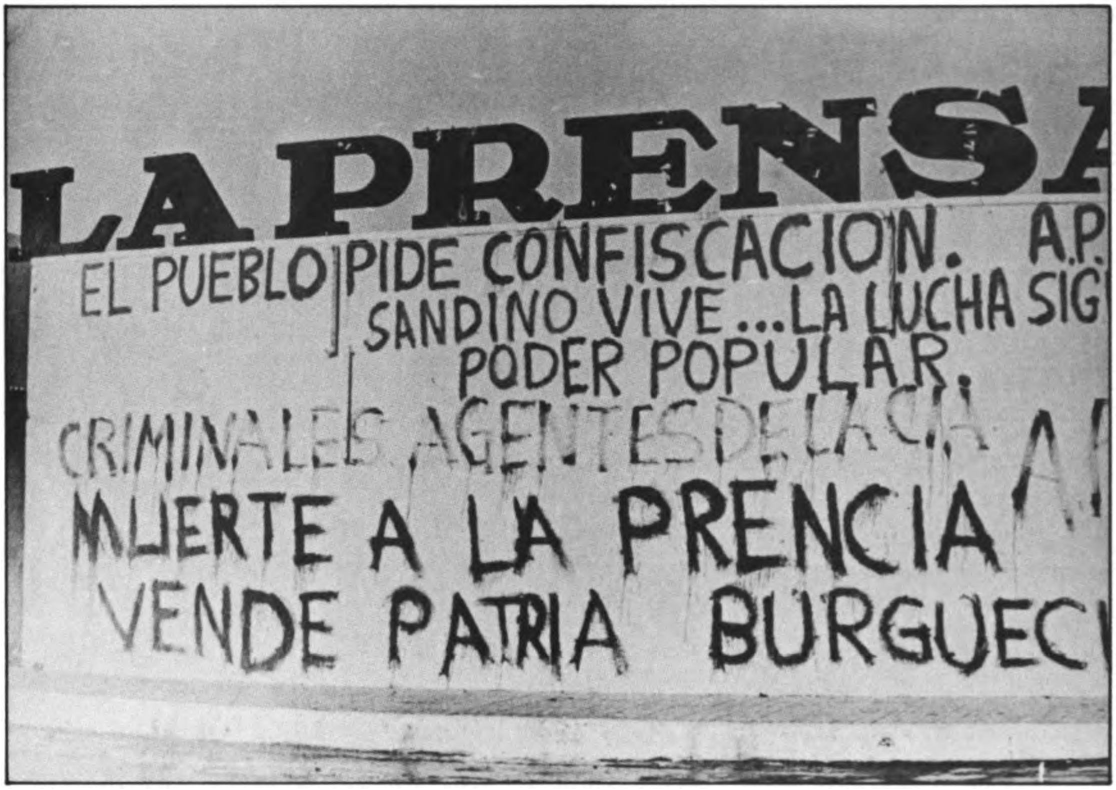
Pedrito Traidor


LA PRENSA
EL PUEBLO PIDE CONFISCACION. A.P.
SANDINO VIVE ... LA LUCHA SIG
PODER POPULAR.
CRIMINALES AGENTES DE LA C.I.A.
MUERTE A LA PRENCIA
VENDE PATRIA BURGUEC

Sandinista harassment of *La Prensa* includes a campaign to discredit it as part of the "traitorous bourgeoisie" with links to the CIA.

LENIN
Lenin
LENIN
Lenin

While the Sandinistas suppress information from non-Communist sources, they make sure that the bookstores are filled with materials from Cuba and other Soviet bloc countries.

Bishops Conference issued a pastoral letter which made clear that the church would cooperate fully with the revolution so long as the new government fulfilled its promises to bring about freedom and social justice.

One early irritant in church-state relations was the Sandinistas' promotion of their "Popular Church." A number of radical priests, including several of the foreign priests serving in Nicaragua, distanced themselves from the traditional church hierarchy and gave their primary allegiance to the FSLN. The Sandinistas embraced these priests, sponsoring their activities and appointing several to prominent positions in the new government.

In a secret policy paper written shortly after they seized power in 1979, the Sandinistas outlined their policy of neutralizing the traditional church hierarchy while elevating their own "Popular Church."

> With the Catholic Church and Protestant Church, we should strengthen relations on a diplomatic level, maintaining, generally, a careful policy which seeks to neutralize as much as possible conservative positions and to strengthen our ties with the priests sympathetic to the revolution, while at the same time we are stimulating the revolutionary sectors of the Church. With the Protestant Church, which is generally formed by North American religious sects, we should adopt a restrictive policy, conduct an intelligence operation on them, and, if they are caught, arrange for their immediate expulsion.[14]

Relations between the church and the Sandinistas deteriorated during 1980 as the FSLN maneuvered to remove non-Marxists from the government and to consolidate its power. The church was particularly critical of Sandinista efforts to use the educational system to indoctrinate school children in Marxism. It also complained in 1980 when the Sandinistas used a universally supported literacy campaign as a vehicle to spread their propaganda.[15]

In October 1980, the FSLN issued a communique summarizing its position on religion. At that time, the Sandinistas still desired to project the image of moderation and pluralism which had facilitated the formation of the national anti-Somoza coalition the previous year. Accordingly, the communique acknowledged the contribution of the church to the revolution:

> The Catholic bishops on various occasions have valiantly denounced the crimes and abuses of the dictatorship, especially Monsignor Obando y Bravo and Monsignor Salazar y Espinoza who, among others, suffered harassment from the Somocista bands.

While the Sandinistas welcomed the support of Christians, they prohibited any religious proselytizing within the FSLN itself. They denied that they were seeking to divide the church and defended the priests who were serving in the government in violation of instructions from the Vatican. They stated that they would respect freedom of religion, but warned that they would not tolerate anyone turning religious activities "into political acts contrary to the Revolution."[16]

As church-state relations deteriorated, the Sandinistas sought ways to reduce the influence of the church and promote the growth of their "Popular Church." In July 1981, the Sandinistas insisted that the church relinquish its control over the weekly televised Masses celebrated by Archbishop Obando. They told the church that henceforth it must share its television time with pro-Sandinista priests. The church refused to surrender to the Sandinistas control of what it considered clearly an internal church matter; it chose to cancel the television Masses rather than allow the Sandinistas to dictate who could celebrate them.

By 1982, the differences between the church and the Sandinistas became far sharper. Early that year, the bishops issued a pastoral letter criticizing the government's mistreatment of the Miskito Indians of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast region.[17] The Sandinistas rejected the church's charges and insisted that the pastoral letter was part of an effort to discredit the government.

The declaration of the State of Emergency on March 15, 1982, directly affected the operation of the church's radio station, *Radio Catolica*. The government immediately closed *Radio Catolica* for two weeks. It allowed *Radio Catolica* to reopen on March 29, but it prohibited the station from broadcasting any news.

During the summer of 1982, increasing Sandinista actions against the church precipitated a major crisis. Alarmed at the Sandinistas' efforts to undermine the church in Nicaragua, on June 29 Pope John Paul II sent a letter to the Nicaraguan bishops stressing the need for church unity and for respect for the conventional hierarchy extending from the Vatican through the local bishops. In his letter, the Pope criticized advocates of the "Popular Church" for infiltrating into religious matters their ideological views of class struggle and their acceptance of violence as a means to political ends.

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[14] *"The 72-Hour Document": The Sandinista Blueprint for Constructing Communism in Nicaragua,* United States Department of State, February 1986.

[15] For further observations on the literacy campaign, see Robert S. Leiken, "Nicaragua's Untold Stories: Sandinista corruption and violence breed bitter opposition," *The New Republic,* October 4, 1984, p. 19.

[16] "Official Communique of the National Directorate of the FSLN on Religion," printed in the official FSLN newspaper *Barricada* on October 7, 1980. This communique was issued to limit the damage resulting from the disclosure of a secret FSLN document written in late 1979 telling local Sandinista leaders how to approach Christmas activities. In this 1979 paper, the FSLN declared its intention to orient "the celebration of Christmas specifically [toward] the children and with a different, fundamentally political, content." The Sandinistas explained that they did not plan to confront the tradition of Christmas directly since that would cause "political conflicts and we would lose influence among our people." They noted that the Christmas tradition had still not been "totally eradicated" in the Soviet Union 62 years after the Communist revolution, and that it would be foolish to attempt to do it so soon in Nicaragua. Instead, they chose to "transform" the Christmas tradition to suit their political purposes. See Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family* (New York: Random House, 1985), p. 214.

[17] See Chapter VII.

The Pope's letter struck at the heart of the Sandinistas' "Popular Church," and the government attempted to suppress all information about it. The Sandinistas formally censored the papal letter, leading the independent daily *La Prensa* to refuse to go to print for several days in protest. Father Bismarck Carballo, spokesman for Archbishop Obando and director of *Radio Catolica*, urged the Sandinistas to relent. He pointed out that the Pope's letter would inevitably be circulated widely and noted that censoring the letter would only worsen the situation. Finally, the Sandinistas permitted the Pope's letter to be printed, but they ordered that it be accompanied by an official government statement interpreting the Pope's words.

The Sandinistas were embarrassed by the Pope's letter and took out their revenge on Father Carballo. For some months, Borge's Interior Ministry had been proceeding with a plan to entrap Carballo in a sex scandal. A female MINT undercover agent had approached Carballo claiming to be a parishioner in need of spiritual guidance. In August, she contacted Carballo stating that she was despondent, and she urged him to come to her home to provide counseling. Shortly after Carballo arrived, a secret police agent burst in, struck Carballo on the head and at gunpoint forced him to disrobe. The DGSE agent then fired his pistol to signal other State Security personnel dressed as regular police who were lying in wait nearby. These "police" entered the house and seized Carballo. They then dragged the naked priest outside where a Sandinista mob (*turba*) and Sandinista newsmen had been planted. Carballo was taken to jail and held naked for six hours before being released. Pictures of the nude priest were aired on the Sandinista-controlled television network and brandished on the front page of Sandinista newspapers, accompanied by allegations that he was romantically involved with the MINT undercover agent.[18]

Many Nicaraguans were shocked by the Carballo incident, and tension increased dramatically in the following days. Numerous incidents occurred, including strikes by students at Catholic schools protesting the Sandinistas' harassment of the church and a *turba* attack on the archbishop. In mid-August, a major riot erupted in the Monimbo neighborhood of Masaya when a *turba* threatened striking students at the Salesian School. The local townspeople rallied to protect the students and quickly drove off the *turba*. The people then demonstrated violently against Sandinista actions; they chased away the local police and ransacked the neighborhood police station. As Sandinista forces moved in to regain control, more violence ensued and at least two people were killed.[19]

The Monimbo incident shocked the Sandinistas and showed them that they could not attack the church so directly without provoking a violent backlash from the Nicaraguan faithful. They called off this phase of their campaign against the church and began efforts to defuse the situation. (Borge, whose Interior Ministry had engineered the disastrous Carballo affair and directed the *turbas*, suddenly embarked on a lengthy visit to the Soviet Union and Bulgaria.)

A new crisis in church-state relations centered on Pope John Paul II's March 1983 visit to Nicaragua. In the months preceding the Pope's arrival, the Sandinistas sought to turn the visit to their political advantage. They prohibited *La Prensa* and *Radio Catolica* from releasing any news of the papal trip not provided by the government, and they attempted to arrange the schedule to make it appear that the Pope was actively supporting their regime. Senior Vatican officials had to travel to Managua to negotiate directly with the *comandantes* and hammer out satisfactory arrangements. The Pope had barely landed in Managua, however, when the Sandinistas attempted to politicize his visit: Junta Coordinator Daniel Ortega used the Pope's arrival ceremony as a forum for a scathing diatribe against the United States. The Sandinistas also violated an agreement that those priests who had defied the Vatican's instructions to leave the government would not be permitted to participate in the papal visit; they included Culture Minister Father Ernesto Cardenal in the welcoming party at the airport.

The Pope, however, refused to allow the Sandinistas to manipulate his trip. At an open air service in Leon, he spoke of the right of parents to select a religious education for their children—a right the faithful knew the Sandinistas had denied to Nicaraguan parents by imposing their Marxist educational program on even the country's private and religious schools. The Pope then returned to Managua, where more than a half-million Nicaraguans (one-sixth of the country's population) had turned out to hear him celebrate Mass. In his homily, the Pope stressed the need for one united church. He emphasized his support for Nicaragua's bishops, particularly Archbishop Obando y Bravo.

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[18] The International League for Human Rights, *Nicaragua's Human Rights Record*, March 1983, p. 26. See also Annex 3.

[19] See Raymond Bonner, "2 Die in Catholic Protests in Nicaragua," *New York Times*, August 18, 1982, p. A3; Larry Boyd, "Nicaraguan youth take over schools in latest sign of polarization: Students say priest maligned, government quells protests," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 19, 1982, p. 4; and Raymond Bonner, "Humiliation of Priest Fires Nicaragua," *New York Times*, August 21, 1982, p. A2. The International League for Human Rights concluded on page 25 of its March 1983 report to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights that:

> Catholic Church hierarchy in Nicaragua have been subjected to both physical and verbal abuse in what appears to be a Government campaign to undermine their authority as spiritual leaders. . . .Official Church reports reveal the recurrence of attempted defamation and physical assaults directed against prominent clerics, the exercise of State control over the communications media, including those of the Church, threats to religious education and the tendency of public demonstrations to turn violent.

With their plan to exploit the papal visit a failure, the Sandinistas tried to embarrass and intimidate the Pope. Hundreds of women placed by State Security directly in front of the podium began chanting Sandinista slogans and heckling the Pope, and their voices were channeled into the loudspeaker system. Even during the purely religious portions of the Mass, the Sandinista hecklers repeatedly interrupted the Pope and forced him to call for silence. The faithful, stunned by the spectacle, left the plaza angry and humiliated at the end of the service. Meanwhile, the *comandantes* stood on the platform with clinched fists held high as the Sandinista party anthem was played and the loudspeakers repeated the FSLN chant "*Direccion Nacional—Ordene*!" (National Directorate—Give Your Orders!)[20]

Following the debacle at the Pope's Mass, which drew wide criticism from abroad as well as inside Nicaragua, the Sandinistas sought new ways to attack the church. One tactic was to restrict the activities of *Radio Catolica*. Shortly after the papal visit, the government subjected the station to strict prior censorship. It ordered *Radio Catolica* to submit to the censors 24 hours in advance its full program schedule, with the content identified and a copy of all material to be read over the air. The government prohibited broadcast of live Masses; in order to be broadcast, Masses had to be recorded and the tapes submitted for prior censorship. Even the transmission of religious events such as the Easter "Stations of the Cross" procession in Managua was prohibited.

During the summer of 1983, the Sandinistas implemented their long-standing plan for compulsory military service. This conscription was widely criticized by non-Sandinista groups on the grounds that it forced Nicaraguans to serve in what was essentially a political army of the FSLN party. The church complained that the draft made no allowance for conscientious objectors who did not believe in the use of violence. The Sandinista conscription law left imprisonment, hiding, or exile the only options to those who refused to enter the FSLN military.

The Sandinistas vilified the church leaders for their criticism of the draft. In October, they unleashed their *turbas*. The mobs attacked some 20 churches in the Managua area, interrupting services and breaking windows. They physically occupied at least three churches, and they destroyed the property of several parishioners. The government denied any responsibility for these events, although uniformed soldiers and police were observed in the *turbas*. Following a major public outcry, the Sandinistas vacated the churches.

A new crisis occurred in the spring of 1984. On Easter Sunday, April 22, the bishops issued a new pastoral letter calling for national reconciliation. They urged a national dialogue that would include all parties involved in the country's deepening political crisis, including both the government and the armed resistance forces. The Sandinistas were intransigent and rejected any notion of negotiation with the resistance groups; they swore that they would only talk to the armed opposition "through the mouths of our guns." The *comandantes* denounced the bishops in the harshest terms for their peace initiative, while the FSLN media launched a vicious propaganda attack of unprecendented proportions to defame the bishops, particularly Archbishop Obando. Incredibly, the Sandinistas attempted to portray Obando as a confederate of Somoza—the charge they regularly level against their opponents—despite the archbishop's long history of opposition to the Somoza dictatorship and support for the revolution.

In addition to their propaganda broadsides, the Sandinistas once again attacked the church directly. In June 1984, State Security accused a Managua priest, Father Luis Amado Pena, of being involved in a conspiracy with the armed opposition. Pena, who denied the charges, was put under virtual house arrest. Church leaders interceded on Pena's behalf and received the Sandinistas' permission for the priest to hold services at his parish church. When Father Pena tried to say Mass, however, the Sandinistas sent their *turbas* to storm the church and disrupt the service. The *turbas* surrounded the church, chanting Sandinista slogans and threatening the faithful inside. They also set fire to tires to fill the church with smoke.

Following continual harassment of Pena, Archbishop Obando and other bishops led a peaceful protest march on July 9.[21] The following day, the Sandinistas expelled 10 foreign priests who were loyal to the hierarchy, including several that had not even participated in the protest march. While the Sandinistas had previously expelled numerous priests and nuns on an individual

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[20] See Christopher Dickey, "Pope Heckled During Mass in Nicaragua," *Washington Post*, March 5, 1983, p. A1; and *Nicaragua's Human Rights Record*, p. 27.

[21] "Priests in Nicaragua Protest," *New York Times*, July 10, 1984, p. A10.

Pope John Paul II visited Nicaragua in March 1983. The Sandinistas tried but failed to exploit the Pope's visit for their political purposes. Frustrated, the Sandinistas organized hecklers to disrupt the Pope's celebration of Mass in Managua.

In the continuing conflict between the Catholic Church and the Sandinistas, Nicaragua's then Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo and many priests demonstrated against Sandinista treatment of Father Luis Amado Pena. Sandinista authorities had accused Pena of "counterrevolutionary activities" and placed him under house arrest. The Sandinistas responded to the peaceful demonstration by expelling 10 foreign-born priests who had lived in Nicaragua for several years, including some who had not even participated in the demonstration.

basis, this was the first mass expulsion.[22] The church viewed this action as an attempt to both weaken it by eliminating a number of its most competent priests and to intimidate it.[23]

In December 1984, the church initiated a new round of discussions with the Sandinistas in an effort to reduce tensions. While a few areas of agreement were reached—for example, the government pledged not to draft seminarians studying for the priesthood—the talks were generally fruitless and were discontinued in May 1985.[24]

On July 24, 1985, the Bishops' Conference issued a communique that stated that the church was willing to pursue the dialogue. The communique also protested the Sandinista media's continuing abuse of church leaders, including the Pope, as well as baseless attacks on the church by government officials, such as a claim by secret police chief Lenin Cerna that Catholic youth groups were collaborating with the CIA to aid those evading the draft.[25] Additional meetings were held in September and October, but no progress was made.

In May of 1985, the Vatican elevated Archbishop Obando to Cardinal, making him the highest church official in Central America. This promotion was widely interpreted as a signal of the Pope's continuing confidence in and support of the Catholic Church in Nicaragua in its struggle against Sandinista persecution.

Obando's return from Rome in June following his investiture prompted the largest spontaneous outpouring of public sentiment in Nicaragua since the triumph of the revolution in 1979. Hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans lined the streets from the airport to his residence to welcome their new cardinal. As the crowd near the airport grew, the Sandinistas blocked access to the airport and used massed police and a water cannon to keep the cardinal's supporters at bay. Some 40,000–50,000 attended Obando's first Mass as cardinal.[26]

While the Sandinistas officially congratulated Obando, they redoubled their efforts to neutralize his activities. DGSE chief Cerna accused the CIA of masterminding the large turnout when the cardinal returned from the Vatican. The secret police arrested several Obando supporters who had participated in the welcoming procession.[27] On September 5, President Ortega alleged that church officials were among those serving as "internal forces complementary to the military aggression. These groups have the mission of opening the internal political front."[28]

Once again, a principal target of the Sandinistas' escalated campaign against the church was *Radio Catolica*. In late June 1985, the head of the censorship office warned Monsignor Carballo that the government would close down the radio station and confiscate its equipment if it broadcast live any of the cardinal's Masses. On September 12, armed MINT officials raided *Radio Catolica* and stopped the transmission of a prerecorded homily by Cardinal Obando. The church vigorously protested this raid, and Interior Minister Borge gave assurances that such an incident would not recur. However, on September 25, MINT forces once again raided *Radio Catolica* and silenced the cardinal's taped homily.

During September, the Sandinistas also reneged on their commitment to refrain from conscripting seminarians. Early in the month, six seminarians from Granada were drafted. The bishop of Granada issued a communique protesting this action. On September 24, five more seminarians were drafted from Chontales. On September 29, priests in the town of Rivas closed churches and suspended Masses; they led the local population in

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[22] See Juan Maltes, "Foreign Priests Expelled After Managua Protest," *Washington Post*, July 10, 1984, p. A9. Since 1979, the Sandinistas have expelled a total of roughly 20 foreign priests and nuns. They have compelled many others to leave the country by refusing to approve their resident status. In late 1984, the government instituted formal procedures to screen the visa applications of foreign priests assigned to Nicaragua. It does not allow priests who are likely to be strong supporters of the traditional church to enter the country. Even disciples of Mother Teresa of Calcutta have been denied visas.

[23] John Lantigua, "Church Says Sandinistas Try To Discredit It," *Washington Post*, July 11, 1984, p. A1; see also Roger Reed, "Sandinistas accused of subverting church," *Washington Times*, September 20, 1982, p. 7A.

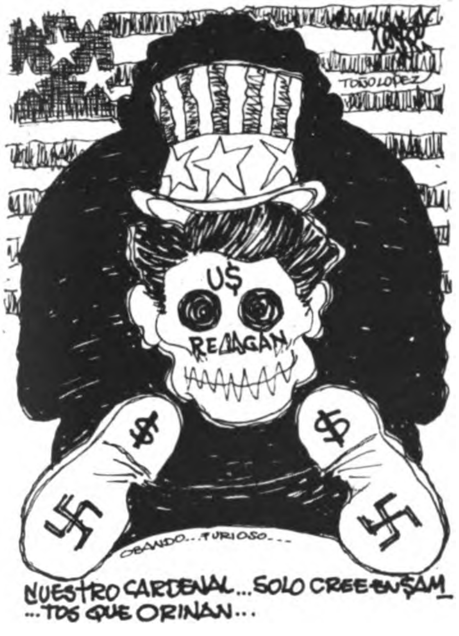
[24] The issue of priests serving in government again came to the fore when the Sandinistas appointed Father Fernando Cardenal, a leading proponent of their "Popular Church," as Minister of Education in open defiance of the Vatican's ban on such service. This action led the Jesuit order to expel Cardenal.

[25] In an interview in the July issue of the pro-FSLN magazine *Sovereignty (Soberania)*, which has links with the Interior Ministry, Cerna had included the church and Catholic youth organizations in a long list of organizations—ranging from the domestic political opposition to the Boy Scouts—allegedly part of a massive CIA conspiracy.

[26] See Robert J. McCartney, "Nicaraguans Welcome Cardinal; Sandinistas Meanwhile Revive Threats to Buy MiGs," *Washington Post*, June 15, 1985, p. A14; Steven Donziger, "Return of Nicaraguan cardinal marred by violence," *United Press International*, June 15, 1985; and Stephen Kinzer, "Opponents Can Go Just So Far in Nicaragua: Cardinal Seems Determined to Test the Sandinistas' Limits," *New York Times*, June 30, 1985, Section 1, p. 3.

[27] Two activists of the Social Democratic Party, Luis Mora Sanchez and Mauricio Paul Membreno Gaitan, were among those detained. They were held in jail for more than six weeks without charges and denied food for a 20-day period. They were finally brought before a People's Anti-Somoza Tribunal on July 31 accused of counterrevolutionary activity. Mora was released in February 1986 following an appeal to Interior Minister Borge by visiting former President Jimmy Carter; Membreno remains in prison awaiting a verdict.

[28] See Stephen Kinzer, "Cardinal Is A Target Of Sandinistas' Criticism," *New York Times*, February 6, 1986, p. A6; Michael Novak, "Setting up the cardinal: Recruited priest acts as point man," *Washington Times*, November 29, 1985, p. 1D; and "Nicaraguan Government Blasts Church Leaders," *United Press International*, January 23, 1986.


TOÑO LOPEZ
US
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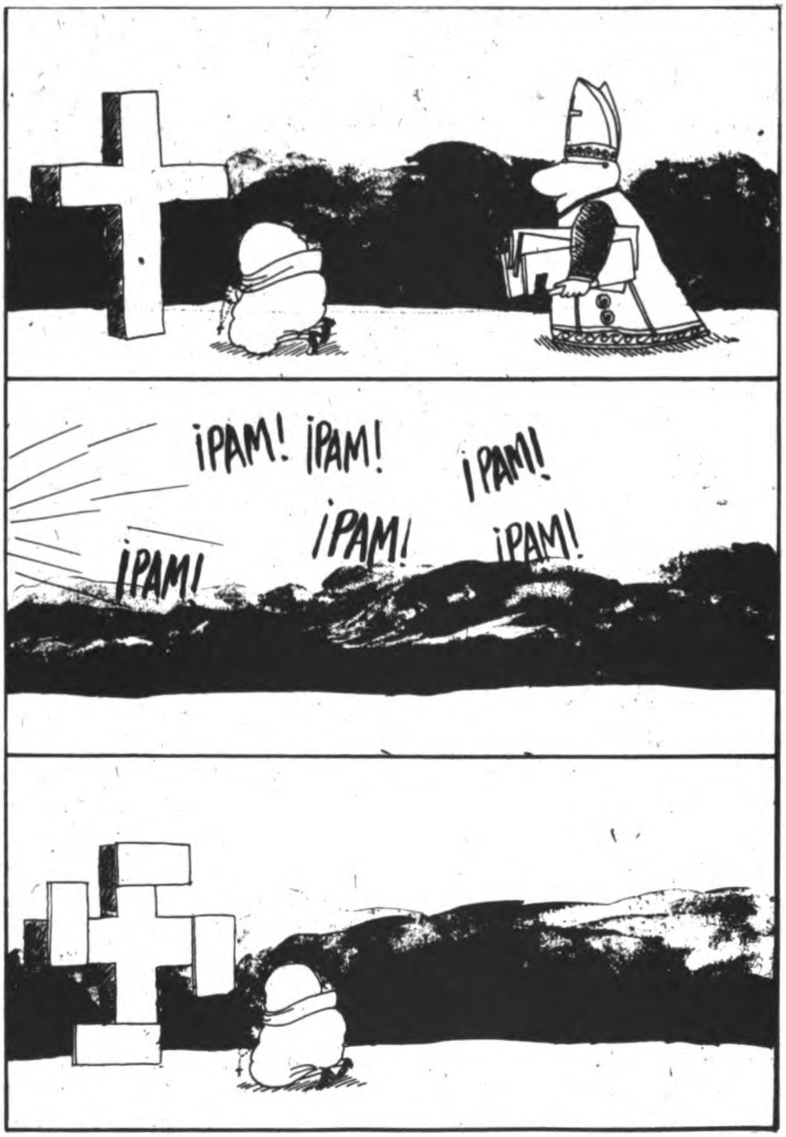
$
$
OBANDO... FURIOSO...
NUESTRO CARDENAL... SOLO CREE EN $AM
...TOS QUE ORINAN...

This caricature of Cardinal Obando y Bravo, printed in the pro-FSLN newspaper *El Nuevo Diario* on February 25, 1986, is typical of Sandinista propaganda demeaning church leaders. The caption reads "Our cardinal...only believes in $aints who pray."


¡PAM!
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On Easter Sunday, April 22, 1984, the Nicaraguan bishops issued a Pastoral Letter calling for national reconciliation and a dialogue including all parties involved in the nation's deepening political crisis. (See Annex 7 for the full text of the letter.) The Sandinistas rejected any negotiations with the democratic resistance and viciously attacked the bishops for their peace proposal. This cartoon, depicting a bishop changing the cross into a Nazi swastika, was printed in the official FSLN newspaper *Barricada* on April 30, 1984.

several public demonstrations protesting the forced induction of the seminarians. Six priests traveled to the northern town of Ocotal to visit the drafted seminarians. The seminarians claimed that they were being mistreated because they refused to wear Sandinista uniforms or participate in military training. On October 1, Sandinista immigration authorities summoned 15 foreign priests from the Rivas-Granada area and threatened them with deportation unless they desisted from "political activity." The church refused to knuckle under, however, and at the annual Bishops Conference, the bishops elected Cardinal Obando their new president. The conference sent a telegram to President Ortega protesting the conscription of seminarians and the threats made to foreign priests.

With *Radio Catolica* muzzled by armed force and with all news about Sandinista persecution of the church, such as the communique of the bishop of Granada, censored from the pages of *La Prensa,* church leaders decided to publish their own special newsletter on church news. On October 12, the first issue of *Iglesia* (*Church*) was printed; the eight-page newsletter contained stories about Obando's trips to Nicaraguan towns where he had been greeted enthusiastically by the populace, and it printed the church's protests of the drafting of seminarians and the raids on *Radio Catolica.*

When the first copies of *Iglesia* were being distributed, the Sandinista Police intercepted the truck and forced it to retrace its route and pick up all copies that had been delivered. Armed Sandinista agents then raided the church office where *Iglesia* had been prepared and confiscated all available copies along with printing equipment, printing plates, and negatives. The Sandinistas claimed that the newsletter was illegal because it had not been officially registered and submitted for censorship. The church insisted that since *Iglesia* was not a commercial newspaper but rather a newsletter to be distributed free of charge to members of the church, it was not legally subject to censorship. Nevertheless, the church sought to meet the Sandinistas' demands and officially register the paper. The government promptly rejected the application, denying the church permission to publish *Iglesia.*

On October 15, State Security troops led by secret police chief Lenin Cerna and Captain Oscar Losa, head of DGSE's Department F-1 (Operations), raided the Managua office of the Archdiocesan Commission for Social Advancement (COPROSA), the Curia's social services agency. They threatened and photographed the staff members and physically ejected them from the building. They formally occupied the office and denied entry even to senior church officials, including the cardinal. They confiscated the office's files and removed them from the premises. (It was later that same day that President Ortega declared the expanded suspension of virtually all civil liberties.)[29]

At first, the Sandinistas denied that they had occupied the COPROSA office. A MINT communique released that evening described reports of the occupation as "a deliberate lie to confuse international public opinion." Subsequently, when the fact of the seizure could no longer be denied, the Sandinistas justified their action by arguing that COPROSA had been engaging in "illegal" activities. Vice President Sergio Ramirez insisted that because COPROSA did not itself have legal standing conferred by the Sandinista government, all its actions were therefore illegal. This technical reasoning ignored the fact that COPROSA was not an independent organization but rather an arm of the Managua archdiocese. On November 11, the Ministry of Justice notified the church that COPROSA would have to have legal standing before it could resume its activities: it implied that the COPROSA office might be returned after the Sandinistas had completed their investigation of its "illegal" activities such as "competing" with the Sandinista government in the provision of education, health care, and housing. (In early 1986, however, the government formally confiscated the COPROSA offices.)

The seizure of COPROSA and the announcement of the expanded State of Emergency were accompanied by a new barrage of propaganda against the church. The October 15 MINT communique attacked Monsignor Carballo and denounced his management of *Radio Catolica* and his efforts to publish *Iglesia* as "a clear and open challenge to the authorities" which was "absolutely intolerable." On October 17, Minister of Agriculture and FSLN National Directorate member Jaime Wheelock included the "false prophets" as one of the main targets of the expanded State of Emergency; Wheelock asserted that it was necessary to suspend guarantees that had allowed priests to "attack from the pulpit, in the name of God, a revolution that is protected by God." Tomas Borge described the cardinal as the "ideological siamese twin of President Reagan" whom the Sandinistas were seeking "to neutralize in the political and ideological field." The Sandinista media were saturated with articles denigrating the church, including stinging personal attacks on Cardinal Obando attempting to link him directly with the armed resistance. In articles in the October 19 *Barricada*, for example, the cardinal was vilified for allegedly allowing "the [Somoza National] Guard to use God" and described him as "a central personality" in the counterrevolution.[30]

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[29] See Edward Cody, "Nicaraguan Crackdown Seen Aimed at Church: Relaxation of Emergency Measures Ends," *Washington Post*, October 17, 1985, p. A1.

[30] See Edward W. Desmond and Laura Lopez, "Enemies Within; Civil liberties are suspended," *Time*, October 28, 1985, p. 58.

On October 18, Borge summoned the cardinal to his office where he questioned him about COPROSA, the church's new human rights offices, and any church ties with political parties. Borge instructed the cardinal not to make pastoral visits outside Managua without prior government authorization. He also threatened to expel priests who continued to speak out.

Cardinal Obando refused to be bound by Borge's edict, however, and continued his pastoral visits into the interior. On October 20, he traveled north to Esteli where he led a procession of some 5,000 faithful and celebrated Mass at the town's cathedral. (The government had banned outdoor masses in an attempt to limit the number of people who could attend.) Sandinista police set up a large roadblock outside of Esteli and stopped and searched vehicles headed for the town.

The cardinal headed east for a Mass scheduled in La Libertad on October 26. The Sandinista police set up roadblocks along the route, preventing some 2,000 worshipers from reaching La Libertad. Cardinal Obando responded by celebrating an unscheduled Mass in Juigalpa for those whom the Sandinistas had prohibited from reaching La Libertad. He then proceeded to La Libertad where he was greeted enthusiastically by the local townspeople.

On October 29, the government ordered *Radio Catolica* closed for 48 hours because it broadcast a portion of a homily by Cardinal Obando reading a passage from the scriptures. In the offending program, the cardinal referred to rights being given to man by God, but being taken away by man himself.[31]

On November 4, all priests from Region IV, which includes the cities of Masaya, Carazo, Rivas, and Granada, were summoned to the government's regional headquarters in Granada. Sandinista officials lectured them about the suspension of civil liberties under the October 15 augmented State of Emergency and threatened to expel foreign priests. During late October–early November, the Sandinistas called in numerous lay church workers for similar lectures and interrogations. They also used pressure tactics to induce seminarians to leave their studies. On November 7, the Sandinistas deported Julio Rodas Anaya, a Salvadoran working as a technical adviser for COPROSA, charging him with "counterrevolutionary activities"; they confiscated his home and personal possessions and placed his family under house arrest.

The cardinal visited the northern towns of Ocotal on November 7 and Chinandega on November 10 and was welcomed by thousands of faithful. The Sandinistas made no overt effort to interfere with the Masses, but at dawn on November 12, secret police agents raided the homes of 12 persons who had helped organize the cardinal's trip to Chinandega. The male prisoners were taken to the DGSE prison at El Chipote in Managua, while the women prisoners were held in a separate jail in Leon.[32]

Also on November 12, eight priests from the Managua area were summoned to police headquarters. The eight were photographed, fingerprinted, and subjected to intense interrogations, which included physical abuse. The Sandinistas accused the priests of mentioning "political issues" in their homilies, such as pleas for the return of the COPROSA office. The mother of one of the priests was also called in for interrogation.

The Sandinistas attempted to prevent information about their increased repression of the church from becoming public knowledge. Those subjected to grueling interrogations were routinely warned not to discuss their detention. On November 10, the Sandinistas arrested *La Prensa*'s religious reporter, Norman Talavera, ransacking his home and seizing his personal papers. They held him for five days at El Chipote, even though his articles about the Sandinistas' attacks on the church had regularly been censored.[33]

On December 1, 1985, Pope John Paul II wrote a letter to Cardinal Obando and the bishops of Nicaragua in which he recognized "the different types of intimidation and indignities to priests and faithful Catholics." The Pope lamented "the painful reality" of the church in Nicaragua because of its daily "suffering and privation, sorrow and uncertainty" which had grown even greater in recent weeks. The archbishops of the five Central American countries and Panama, who were attending a synod in Rome at the time of the papal letter, issued a separate message expressing solidarity with the church in Nicaragua and denouncing "arbitrary arrests of many people accused of collaborating with the church. They have been subjected to humiliation, lengthy interrogations, and physical and moral duress."

On January 1, 1986, the Sandinistas took the final step to silence *Radio Catolica*. When the station failed to transmit President Ortega's New Year's message, they declared that this constituted "a high level of example of conduct outside the law." As punishment for this "criminal act," the government ordered *Radio Catolica* closed indefinitely.[34]

In mid-1986, Sandinista repression of the Catholic Church escalated to include the banishment of prominent Nicaraguan-born priests. In late June, they refused to allow Monsignor Bismarck Carballo to reenter the country. In early July, they expelled Bishop Pablo Antonio Vega, vice president of the Bishops' Conference. Pope John Paul II led the international outcry against this latest form of Sandinista religious persecution.

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[31] See "Nicaragua Censors Church Radio Station," *Chicago Tribune*," October 31, 1985, p. 12.

[32] See "8 Charged in Nicaragua after Welcome for Cardinal," *Washington Post*, November 14, 1985, p. A39.

[33] See Vincent J. Schodolski, "Foes fear Sandinistas' crackdown," *Chicago Tribune*, December 3, 1985, p. 12.

[34] Directorate of Communications Media Statement, printed in the official FSLN newspaper *Barricada* on January 3, 1986. See Richard Levine and Milt Freudenheim, "Even Silence is Suspected," *New York Times*, January 5, 1986, Section 1, p. 2; and Kinzer, "Sandinista Ban on Church Radio," Section 1, p. 1. See also Annex 7 for further information on the Catholic Church.

A statement issued in September 1982 by Archbishop Roach, President of the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, regarding the Sandinistas is still applicable today:

> Institutions and persons of the Church, including bishops, have been subjected to attacks of a serious, at times disgraceful nature.... We cannot fail to protest in the strongest possible terms, the attempted defamation and acts of physical abuse directed at prominent clerics, the inappropriate State control of the communications media, including those of the Church, the apparent threat to the Church's role in education and, most ominous of all, the increasing tendency of public demonstrations to result in bloody conflict.[35]

Other Religious Groups

The Sandinistas have not limited their persecution to the Catholic Church. Paralleling their treatment of the Catholic clergy, the Sandinistas have harassed and repressed those leaders of other religious groups who do not align themselves with the FSLN's Marxist revolution, and they have embraced and promoted those religious leaders who do. The Sandinistas have been particularly harsh in dealing with the smaller denominations.

The evangelical station *Radio Waves of Light* has been forced to submit to prior censorship, and although it has not taken a position critical of the Sandinistas, has nevertheless had some of its religious programs prohibited. Religious films, including ones on subjects such as "How To Study the Bible," "How To Pray," and "Faith that Works," must be approved by the Ministry of Culture before they can be used; some have been banned. Pastors attempting to bring such films into Nicaragua have had them seized at the airport.

The Moravian Church, which has many followers among the indigenous people of the Atlantic Coast region, has suffered repeated acts of repression. As relations between the Miskito Indians and the Sandinistas deteriorated, the government struck out at the Moravian Church as part of their campaign to subjugate the Indians.[36] In 1982, the Sandinistas burned at least 50 Moravian churches as they destroyed whole Miskito villages and forced some 10,000 Indians to abandon their ancestral homelands and move to FSLN-controlled resettlement camps. (No facilities for formal worship were provided at these camps.) When large numbers of Miskitos rebelled against this treatment, the Sandinistas accused Moravian priests of leading a "counterrevolution." The Sandinistas closed the Moravian Biblical Institute and the church's Social Action Committee.[37] Many Moravian priests were arrested, and some were held for up to two years without trial. The Sandinistas have sought to intimidate and control church leaders, such as in 1983 when two Sandinista military officials warned delegates to the Moravian synod not to elect certain pastors to the church's provincial board.[38]

Other small churches have similarly been accused of being "subversive" or "counterrevolutionary" for failing to support the FSLN. During the summer of 1982, as Sandinista harassment of the Catholic Church was intensifying, Interior Minister Borge sharply criticized other religious groups as well. Shortly thereafter, the *turbas* seized more than 20 church properties from religious groups such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons), Seventh-Day Adventists, Mennonites, and Jehovah's Witnesses.[39] Some of these properties were later returned, but others remain in Sandinista hands. As a result of Sandinista persecution, some small churches have virtually ceased to operate or now work underground.[40]

The umbrella organization for Protestant churches, the National Council of Evangelical Pastors (CNPEN), has attempted to avoid direct involvement in Nicaragua's deepening political crisis. Nevertheless, its leaders have been subjected to increasing harassment. The Sandinistas have repeatedly refused to grant CNPEN legal standing, thereby denying it privileges such as access to public facilities. In March 1985, Sandinista officials summoned CNPEN leaders to pressure them to avoid any criticism of the Sandinistas or the pro-FSLN organization Evangelical Committee for Aid to Development (CEPAD).[41] Days later the Sandinista media asserted that stories reporting CNPEN complaints about CEPAD were false and merely one facet of "a campaign to discredit and slander" CEPAD.

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[35] Archbishop John R. Roach, U.S. Catholic Conference, Washington, D.C., September 9, 1982.

For further information on the situation of the Church in Nicaragua, see Humberto Belli, *Breaking Faith: The Sandinista Revolution and Its Impact on Freedom and Christian Faith in Nicaragua*, (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1985); and Sister Camilla Mullay, O.P., and Father Robert Barry, O.P., *The Barren Fig Tree: A Christian Reappraisal of the Sandinista Revolution*, The Institute on Religion and Democracy, Washington, D.C., 1984.

[36] See Chapter VII.

[37] Margaret Wilde, "Moravian-Sandinista Dialogue," *Christian Century*, May 4, 1983, pp. 431-32.

[38] For further information on the Moravian Church, *see Nicaragua's Human Rights Record*, pp. 29-32; Terri Shaw, "Nicaragua Holds 8 Missionaries, Orders 10 Out; Says Jailed Pastor Killed in Escape Try," *Washington Post*, March 21, 1982, p. A1; and Barbara Crossette, "Refugees Accuse Sandinistas of Harassment," *New York Times*, July 18, 1983, p. A1.

[39] See "Sandinistas Occupy Headquarters of Mormon Church," *United Press International*, July 16, 1982; Frederick Kiel, "Nicaragua to Expel American Clerics," *United Press International*, July 22, 1982; "Nicaragua Accuses Missionaries of CIA Plot," *United Press International*, August 12, 1982; and "Sects Under Attack in Nicaragua," *United Press International*, August 12, 1982.

[40] The Salvation Army is among the Christian organizations forced out of Nicaragua by the Sandinistas. Its humanitarian activities there were ended in August 1980 after "ominous verbal threats from the authorities, and, finally, instructions to close the program and leave the country." Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Ernest A. Miller, Salvation Army, to Morton Blackwell, Special Assistant to the President for Public Liaison, September 12, 1983 (files of Lt. Col. Miller).

In April, Sandinista harassment of Protestant churches escalated when the government seized six truckloads of food, clothing, and Bibles donated by American evangelist Larry Jones. Although the Reverend Jones had worked through government channels and had received official assurances—including the personal word of President Ortega—that the materials could be distributed by Protestant churches to Nicaragua's needy, the Sandinistas confiscated the entire shipment as soon as it entered the country.[42] Jones publicly protested this action, and when he and two other American evangelists attempted to participate in "Day of the Bible" activities in September, Sandinista immigration authorities denied them entry into Nicaragua.[43]

In the weeks following the October 15 augmented State of Emergency, State Security summoned Protestant leaders to its prison at El Chipote. Among those subjected to intensive interrogation, threats, verbal abuse, and in several cases physical abuse such as being stripped naked and placed in a cold room for extended periods, were prominent members of the religious community including the current and former presidents of CNPEN, several CNPEN pastors, the head of the Campus Crusade for Christ, the head of the Alliance for Children (a children's Bible study organization), the national director of the Bible Society, and the pastor of the First Evangelical Church of Managua. Before releasing them, the secret police warned the religious leaders not to talk about their interrogations. When the pastor of the Evangelical Church, Boanerges Mendoza, defied this gag order, he was rearrested, and his personal papers as well as his automobile were confiscated by State Security agents. On October 31, Evangelical minister Juan Pablo Pineda was shot and bayoneted by two Sandinista soldiers near the town of Condega in Esteli Department. On November 1, DGSE agents raided the office of the Campus Crusade for Christ and confiscated printed materials and mimeograph machines.[44]

Nicaragua's Jewish community has all but disappeared under the Sandinistas. Many of the country's Jews left shortly before or shortly after the 1979 revolution. They were alarmed by the FSLN's outspoken hostility toward Israel and its close ties with the Palestine Liberation Organization. (Several leading Sandinistas had been trained by and conducted operations with the PLO and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.)[45] In 1978, a group of Sandinistas fire-bombed the country's only synagogue in Managua while services were being held. After the Sandinistas seized power, they harassed members of the Jewish community, threatening them, detaining some, and often confiscating their property on some pretext. They confiscated the synagogue and turned it into the headquarters of their "mass organization" for grade schoolers, the Sandinista Children's Association. Following widespread international criticism of their treatment of Jews, the Sandinistas offered to restore the synagogue to the Jewish community, but the fact that fewer than 10 Jews continued to live in the entire country made this offer moot.[46]

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[41] This followed a report by the Institute on Religion and Democracy raising the issue of CEPAD's misuse of foreign donations for political purposes. See Annex 8.

[42] "Sandinistas gag American pastor," *Washington Times*, April 23, 1985, p. 1A.

[43] Some 15 Protestant ministers have been refused entry into Nicaragua.

[44] See "Nicaragua Church-State Tensions Grow: Sandinista Mobs Harass Protestants," *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 1985, Section II, P. 5. See also Annex 8.

[45] For further information on Sandinista ties with the PLO, see *The Sandinistas and Middle Eastern Radicals*, United States Department of State, August 1985.

[46] American Jewish leaders have attempted to work with the Sandinistas to have the synagogue reopened, but their efforts have been rebuffed. For information from three former members of Nicaragua's Jewish community, see "Testimony of Jews Exiled from Nicaragua," given at the White House on March 14, 1985. See also *Nicaragua's Human Rights Record*, pp. 32–33.

VI. Basic Political Rights

The 1979 revolution against the Somoza regime had the overwhelming support of the Nicaraguan people. The revolutionary movement led militarily by the FSLN included a broad spectrum of political parties, private sector organizations, and labor confederations. A key factor leading to the formation of this national alliance was the Sandinistas' pledge to promote political pluralism and to hold free elections. This commitment—made directly to the Nicaraguan people and specified in a July 1979 message to the Organization of American States (OAS)—has been consistently violated by the Sandinistas. They have systematically pushed aside the democratic members of the broad-based revolutionary coalition as they maneuvered to consolidate their power.

In September 1979, barely two months after the revolution, the leaders of the FSLN met in a secret session to map out their plans to consolidate their power and construct a Marxist-Leninist state in Nicaragua. The report of this meeting (commonly called "The 72-Hour Document") was intended to be an internal document circulated only among party members, and thus described the Sandinistas' true intentions. It explained that the Sandinistas regarded the broad-based revolutionary coalition merely as "a special class alliance... organized by the Sandinista Front to neutralize Yankee intervention." The report stated that FSLN was "the hegemonic force of the Nicaraguan Revolution," and it indicated how the FSLN intended to use its "mass organizations" and its "partisan army without precedent" to secure its power.[1]

In this remarkable document, the Sandinistas vilified the private sector as "the traitorous bourgeoisie," labeling it the foremost enemy of the revolution. To neutralize the private sector, they adopted a strategy of "attacking its most representative elements as soon as they give us the first opportunity" and isolating it from "the democratic sectors." The Sandinistas denigrated the existing democratic parties as "groups of organized petty bourgeoisie." Toward these parties and Nicaragua's three non-Sandinista Marxist parties—which the FSLN saw as potential rivals to its claim of being the "revolutionary vanguard"—the Sandinistas adopted a strategy of absorbing those who were willing to accept FSLN leadership, while declaring that those who resisted "must be crushed."[2]

In early July 1979, before the fall of Somoza, all elements of the anti-Somoza coalition agreed to a "Program of Government" which outlined the structure of the revolutionary government. At this time, the Sandinistas wished to conceal their Communist ideology and project an image of pluralism. While they assured their control of the ruling junta by filling three of the five seats with Sandinistas, they agreed to include two moderates: Violeta Chamorro, widow of martyred *La Prensa* editor Pedro Joaquin Chamorro; and Alfonso Robelo, a private sector leader and head of the social democratic Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN).

The Cabinet similarly contained both Sandinistas and members of other parties, although the FSLN had direct control of key ministries: e.g., National Directorate member Tomas Borge was appointed Minister of Interior, and Humberto Ortega became head of the Sandinista army. To promote the image of pluralism during the initial phase of the new government, the Sandinistas picked former National Guard Colonel Bernardino Larios to serve as the first Defense Minister. Larios had no real power, however, and by the end of the year Humberto Ortega replaced him as Defense Minister.[3] The Supreme Court included members of non-FSLN parties as well, such as the Conservatives and the Independent Liberals.[4]

While the junta enjoyed legislative as well as executive powers, the original program of government—agreed to by all elements of the revolutionary coalition—

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[1] *"The 72-Hour Document": The Sandinista Blueprint for Constructing Communism in Nicaragua,"* Department of State, February 1986. See also David Nolan, *The Ideology of the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Revolution*, Institute of Inter-American Studies, Graduate School of International Studies, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, 1984, for a comprehensive analysis of Sandinista ideology and objectives.

[2] During his May 1984 secret speech to the Moscow-line Nicaraguan Socialist Party, FSLN National Directorate member Bayardo Arce admitted that the Sandinistas had never intended to fulfill the promises of pluralism, a mixed economy, and international nonalignment made in 1979. Arce explained that these promises were merely a tactical maneuver to disarm their critics and build the national coalition the FSLN needed in order to seize power. See Juan O. Tamayo, "Nicaraguan Decries Need for Vote: 'Bourgeois Details' Scorned," *Washington Post*, August 8, 1984, p. A18. For the complete text of Arce's speech, see Department of State, *Comandante Bayardo Arce's Secret Speech before the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN)*, March 1985.

[3] Larios was arrested in 1980 and held in jail for more than three years. See Chapter III.

[4] The appointment of these non-Sandinistas to the Supreme Court resulted in the degree of independence noted in Chapter III and was one factor that led the Sandinistas to form the People's Anti-Somocista Tribunals to circumvent the Supreme Court.

called for the formation of a Council of State to serve as the primary legislative branch of the revolutionary government. The Council of State was to be a pluralistic body composed of 33 members representing the principal political, economic, labor, and social organizations in the country.

As the new government settled in, however, it soon became apparent that, regardless of the official structure of the government, the FSLN wielded the real power. All key decisions were made by the National Directorate.

The first major crisis of the new government occurred when the FSLN decided to use its power to secure total control over the Council of State. Under the original apportionment, the Sandinistas would have either directly controlled or exerted a strong influence over a sufficient number of Council seats to establish a working majority. Non-FSLN organizations would have had a major voice, however, and there was the possibility that some of the generally pro-FSLN organizations might have voted against the Sandinistas on certain issues. In the months following the revolution, the Sandinista-dominated junta continuously delayed convening the Council. To quell grumbling about the delay, it eventually announced that the Council would meet in May 1980, nearly a full year after the revolution. In April 1980, shortly before the Council was to hold its first session, the junta decreed that the Council of State was to be restructured; seats were reallocated and the total membership was raised to 47. Nearly all the new seats were awarded to Sandinista-controlled organizations: for example, the Sandinista Defense Committees received nine seats.

This action to expand and reallocate seats in the Council of State gave the FSLN total control of that body. Junta members Chamorro and Robelo, who had opposed the action, resigned. Non-Sandinista groups of the original anti-Somoza coalition, who were already becoming disillusioned with the FSLN, protested vigorously and threatened to boycott the Council of State. The Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP)—the private sector's umbrella group representing tens of thousands of large, medium, and small business representatives, merchants, farmers, ranchers, and professionals—took the lead in negotiating a compromise with the FSLN. In return for a number of commitments by the Sandinistas, including a pledge to replace Chamorro and Robelo with two other moderates and to announce the date of elections on the July 19, 1980, first anniversary of the revolution, the non-FSLN groups agreed in early May to participate in the enlarged Council of State.

The Sandinistas reneged on their commitment, however, and failed to announce a schedule for elections during the celebration of the first anniversary of the revolution. The leaders of the evolving opposition groups protested this violation of the May agreement and began to clamor loudly for elections. To silence these critics, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega announced on August 23, 1980, that elections would not be held until 1985; all electoral activity was to be banned until 1984. He announced that the FSLN had decided that the junta should remain in power until that time.

This declaration that there would be no election for five years stunned those who had expected the Sandinistas to honor their oft-repeated pledge for early elections. Many perceived it as a clear sign that the FSLN intended to consolidate its power before allowing any elections so that it could assure itself victory at the polls.

A further indication of Sandinista intolerance of opposition political activity occurred fewer than three months later. In early November, Robelo's MDN scheduled a political rally in the town of Nandaime, south of Managua. After first approving the rally, the Sandinistas reversed themselves at the last moment, prohibiting the event and using the Sandinista police to prevent people from traveling to Nandaime to attend. This heavy-handed action to stifle normal political activity outraged the opposition and provoked the representatives of democratic political parties, independent labor confederations, and the private sector to walk out of the Council of State in protest.

A. The Private Sector

As "The 72-Hour Document" noted, the Sandinistas regarded the private sector—"the traitorous bourgeoisie"—as their principal domestic enemy. In the wake of the Nandaime incident and the resulting opposition boycott of the Council of State, the Sandinistas acted to intimidate the private sector by sending a clear and powerful signal of their willingness to use force. This message was delivered on November 17, 1980, when DGSE agents gunned down Jorge Salazar on the outskirts of Managua.

Salazar was a prominent coffee grower and a vice president of COSEP. He had collaborated with the Sandinistas during the revolution but had become increasingly critical of FSLN policies during 1980 as the Sandinistas steered the revolution away from its original democratic program. Young and attractive, Salazar was acquiring a wide following, and the Sandinistas regarded him as a particular threat. The FSLN National Directorate chose to eliminate Salazar and use his murder as a

The Sandinista *turbas* vandalized the home and car of Alfonso Robelo, a member of the original revolutionary junta who resigned in April 1980. Robelo went into exile and is now a leader of the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO).

warning to other opponents.[5] The killing of Salazar had a chilling effect on the opposition, who understood that the rules of the game had been changed and that the Sandinistas were prepared to liquidate anyone who stood in their way.

The following year, the Sandinistas took another major step to intimidate the private sector. In October 1981, several COSEP leaders addressed an open letter to the junta protesting that the government's policies were leading Nicaragua toward Marxism and calling on the government to return to the original program of the revolution. The Sandinistas arrested these leaders of the business community and confined them in prison for five months.[6]

Confiscations

While the Salazar killing and the imprisonment of the COSEP leaders are the most dramatic and widely known cases of Sandinista repression of the business community, they are only two incidents in the FSLN's continuing campaign to debilitate the private sector. Frequently, Sandinista pressure comes in the form of confiscation. The government has enacted a multitude of decrees establishing "legal" grounds for confiscation. Some of these laws deal with land reform, the needs of the Sandinista military, or other state programs. In addition, Sandinista laws provide for the seizure of properties that are not "properly exploited" or are being "decapitalized," with the Sandinistas the sole authorities to define these terms and to determine whether property should be seized. Also, one law empowers the government to seize the property of anyone who remains outside of Nicaragua for six months.

The Sandinistas do not need a legal basis for seizing properties, however. On some occasions, the Sandinista military or officials of some government agency simply arrive at a farm or factory and announce they are taking over; the legal pretext comes later, if at all. At other times, Sandinista-controlled unions occupy the premises. Scores of small landowners have lost their lands for failing to inform the Sandinistas of the activities of elements of the armed resistance.

The arbitrary nature of confiscations can go even further, as the Sandinistas disregard their own laws whenever they wish. In one well-known example, the Supreme Court ruled that the government had no basis for confiscating the La Perfecta dairy—one of the country's most efficient—but the junta ignored the decision and seized La Perfecta.

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[5] The Sandinistas charged that Salazar was involved in a conspiracy. They arrested several other individuals and accused them of being Salazar's accomplices. These defendants were quickly convicted and sentenced to prison terms ranging from two to eleven years. The following year, however, the Supreme Court suspended the original charges and the accused were set free. See *Inside the Sandinista Regime: A Special Investigator's Perspective*, United States Department of State, February 1986, for information about the operation to kill Salazar. For background information on the Salazar killing, see Shirley Christian, *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family* (New York: Random House, 1985), pp. 170-184.

[6] See Annex 10.

The political motivation underlying the seizures is often apparent. The following is a brief list of notable cases where the Sandinistas used the power of confiscation to punish, weaken, and intimidate private sector leaders:

- In mid-1983, the Sandinistas insisted that prominent industrialist (and president of the Nicaraguan Red Cross) Ismael Reyes be selected by COSEP to represent Nicaraguan employers at the annual International Labor Organization (ILO) meeting in Geneva. The reason for the Sandinistas' peculiar demand became obvious when, shortly after Reyes left the country, the Sandinistas confiscated his businesses and arrested his son. Reyes, one of Nicaragua's most esteemed business and humanitarian leaders, now lives in exile.
- The Sandinistas confiscated the properties of Ramiro Gurdian, a leading member of COSEP and a prominent agriculturalist, solely because they disliked statements he had made following the United States decision to reduce the amount of sugar it bought from Nicaragua on a preferential basis.
- The current president of COSEP, Enrique Bolanos, has been a particular target for pressure. Sandinista tactics have included using their Marxist unions—supported by the Labor Ministry—to disrupt operations at his SAIMSA cotton plant in 1984, and confiscating much of his lands in 1985. Bolanos himself is frequently attacked in the Sandinista media, and FSLN leaders such as Borge have repeatedly accused him of being a virtual agent of the counterrevolution.[7]

The Sandinistas do not reserve such treatment for prominent opposition leaders: hundreds of members of the private sector, both large and small, have been victims of confiscations. In the period immediately following the revolution, the private sector accounted for roughly 60 percent of Nicaragua's economy, with the state having the remaining 40 percent. Today, as a result of this pattern of confiscations, the private sector's share has been reduced to roughly 50 percent.

Additional Anti-Private Sector Actions

Confiscation forms only one part of the Sandinistas' broad assault on the private sector. In addition, the Sandinistas have used their Marxist economic policies to strangle the private sector. Through a multitude of laws and regulations that control prices, wages, access to financing and foreign exchange, the government can tell business representatives what they can produce, how much they must pay their employees, how much they can charge for their product, and to whom they can sell. In effect, many entrepreneurs and agriculturalists no longer have a real say in the conduct of their own businesses; they have been reduced to serving as little more than administrators for the government. Thus, when describing the Nicaraguan private sector's current share of the economy, even the 50 percent figure mentioned above is misleading. Moreover, high taxes imposed to finance the Sandinistas' military have cut deeply into any profits business representatives can make. The "Catch 22" is that a business' failure to turn a profit can be used as evidence that it is not being properly exploited or is being decapitalized, thus justifying confiscation. Government manipulation of foreign exchange allows producers a slim return on products sold abroad, and serves as another form of high taxation.

Sandinista policies have been harmful not only to large- and medium-sized businesses, but also to tens of thousands of peasant farmers and market vendors as well. Frank Tourniel Amador, a 27-year-old *campesino* from Leon, said:

> Before, you could sell what you grew to whomever you wanted, and buy your supplies from whomever you wanted. Now you must sell your corn or beans or whatever to the State Agricultural Cooperative—at a very low price—and you can only buy sugar, salt, flour, and other things you need from the State as well—and at a very high price! The *campesinos* were hoping things would be better after Somoza. Instead they are much worse.[8]

The Sandinista regime has also interfered with the private sector's organizational activities. For example, when COSEP or one of its component organizations seeks to rent an auditorium or theater for a meeting, the Sandinistas threaten the owner of the premises with severe penalties, including confiscation or damage by the *turbas*. The Sandinistas have also directly blocked some activities. During the summer of 1985, COSEP held a series of meetings in various departments throughout Nicaragua at which large crowds turned out despite Sandinista pressure. In September 1986, COSEP scheduled a "Private Sector Day" activity on the birthday of slain COSEP leader Jorge Salazar. On the day before the event was to take place, Lenin Cerna, the chief of State Security, summoned COSEP president Enrique Bolanos and other COSEP leaders and ordered them to cancel the meeting. Cerna threatened that they would be killed just as Salazar had been. Meanwhile, other COSEP leaders around the country were called in by local DGSE officials and given the same message. To prevent Bolanos from defying this edict, the following morning Sandinista troops erected road blocks around Bolanos's house to prevent his leaving.[9]

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[7] See Stephen Kinzer, "Nicaragua Rebels Inflict Heavy Damage At Border," *New York Times*, June 19, 1983, Section 1, p. 10; and John Lantigua, "Expropriation By Sandinistas Assailed," *Washington Post*, June 18, 1985, p. A8.

[8] *Violence and Oppression in Nicaragua: Hearing Before the Task Force on Central America* (Washington, D.C.: The American Conservative Union, 1984), p. 21.

To a large degree, the Sandinistas have now achieved their goal of destroying the private sector. Disheartened by repression, Marxist economic policies, and the uncertainties of doing business in an environment where the rules change constantly and businesses are confiscated at the whim of the FSLN, thousands of Nicaraguan businesspersons, agriculturalists, and professionals have fled into exile. While many remain struggling to keep their businesses and farms viable and continue to wage a civic battle to have the FSLN return to the revolution's original program, more than six years of Sandinista pressure have clearly taken their toll on the private sector. In his May 1984 secret speech to the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (a Moscow-line Communist party formally allied with the Sandinistas), FSLN National Directorate member Bayardo Arce accurately described the condition of the private sector: "any investment project in our country belongs to the state. The bourgeoisie no longer invests—it subsists."

B. Political Parties and Sandinista Elections

The Sandinistas do not regard Nicaragua's other political parties as serious threats to its power. Nevertheless, the FSLN has acted repeatedly to repress these parties and thwart their efforts to grow and organize.

The secret police have detained hundreds of political leaders and party activists. Most have been released after grueling interrogations and threats, while some have been held for prolonged periods. The Sandinista *turbas* have repeatedly threatened party officials, defacing their homes and offices. FSLN "mass organizations" ~~such~~ as the CDS—which control ration cards—and Sandinista labor unions—which can control employment—routinely pressure rank-and-file members of opposition groups to leave their parties and cease their political activism.

While the Sandinistas proclaim their support for pluralism, in fact, they work relentlessly to block the traditional political and organizational activities of opposition parties. Outdoor events such as party rallies have been banned. Information about the parties is severely restricted by censorship of *La Prensa* and independent radio stations and by impediments to the parties' own efforts to distribute political materials. As a result, much of the only news available to the average Nicaraguan about the activities and policies of the opposition parties is in the highly distorted propaganda delivered by the Sandinista media.

Since the revolution, the opposition parties have repeatedly called on the FSLN to honor its commitment to hold free elections. After announcing in 1980 that no elections would be held until 1985, the Sandinistas worked to consolidate their power and repress their opposition to ensure that they would win any election. They used their domination of the Council of State and the junta to enact laws that assured their control of every step of the electoral process.

The Sandinistas' failure to hold elections became the focus of growing international criticism. In early 1984, faced with wide domestic disenchantment and a growing insurgency, the Sandinistas decided to try to restore their tarnished image by advancing the date of the elections to November of that year. In his May secret speech to the Nicaraguan Socialist Party, National Directorate member Bayardo Arce underlined the FSLN's true attitude toward the elections and what it hoped to accomplish. Arce, the coordinator of the FSLN political commission and the *comandante* designated to manage the FSLN's campaign, described the elections as "a nuisance" which were only made necessary by U.S. pressure. Arce spoke of "putting an end to the artifice of pluralism...which has been useful thus far." He concluded that the elections should be used to obtain "the unity of the Marxist-Leninists of Nicaragua."

The Sandinistas made clear that in no event would the elections jeopardize their power. They insisted that they were the vanguard party of the people with a historic right to power, and that "these elections are to consolidate revolutionary power, not to place it at stake."[10] Then junta member Daniel Ortega, chosen as the FSLN's presidential candidate, vowed "neither bullets nor ballots" could drive the FSLN from power.

Laws Governing Political Parties and the Elections

The Sandinistas used their control of the Council of State to promulgate laws guaranteeing their domination of every aspect of the electoral process. In 1983, they enacted the Political Parties Law, which established the rules governing the existence and functioning of political parties. This law was shaped to ensure complete Sandinista control of the enforcement apparatus, the National Council of Political Parties, thus providing the FSLN life-or-death power over all other parties.

In 1984, the Sandinista-controlled Council of State adopted the Electoral Law, which established the rules under which the elections would be held. Like the Political Parties Law, this law was tailored to fit the Sandinistas' purposes. It ensured that the FSLN would dominate the Supreme Electoral Council and the entire election machinery. It included many provisions (such as restrictions on the length of the campaign and the available media time) that were designed to limit the ability of other parties to counter the Sandinistas' five-year domination of Nicaragua's media. (During the debates on both these laws, the opposition parties walked out to protest the Sandinistas' disregard of democratic principles.)

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[9] See John Lantigua, "Anti-Sandinista Business Group Is Ordered to Cancel Meeting," *Washington Post*, September 7, 1985, p. A22.

[10] *Barricada*, Managua, July 11, 1980. See also Henri Weber, *Nicaragua: The Sandinista Revolution* (London: Verso Ed., 1981), p. 75.

The Fundamental Statute—the interim constitution adopted by the original coalition government in July 1979—called for elections first for local offices and a constituent assembly, and only later for national leaders. To hold elections for President and a National Assembly, the Sandinistas first needed to amend this statute. They did so over the objections of the democratic opposition, who argued that this change in the electoral schedule constituted a clear violation of the rules agreed upon in 1979. The Sandinistas also lowered the voting age to 16, enfranchising more than 100,000 youths who had been indoctrinated for five years in their Marxist education system.

The Democratic Coordinating Board

In July, the principal group of the democratic opposition—the Democratic Coordinating Board *(Coordinadora Democratica)* composed of the Social Christian, Social Democratic, Liberal Constitutionalist, and Nicaraguan Conservative parties as well as the private sector organizations of COSEP and two independent labor confederations [described below]—announced that Arturo Cruz would be its presidential candidate.[11] The Democratic Coordinating Board added that it would participate only if the Sandinistas would guarantee the conditions that would make a free and fair election possible. One of its principal concerns was that the State of Emergency be lifted. On July 19, 1984, Daniel Ortega made clear that the Sandinistas would not rescind the State of Emergency. He announced that some of the rights that had been suspended since 1982 would be restored, but the State of Emergency itself would remain in effect. In practice, the "liberalization" of the State of Emergency had little impact. For example, although officially only matters of "national security" were to be subject to censorship, independent radio stations and *La Prensa* were still compelled to submit all material for prior censorship, and many stories on political issues pertaining directly to the election were banned.

During August and September 1984, Cruz attempted to take his message to the Nicaraguan people by holding a number of rallies throughout the country. The Sandinistas responded with their *turbas*. Repeatedly, the *turbas* attacked Cruz and his followers, pelting them with stones, and striking them with clubs and metal pipes. On several occasions, the car in which Cruz was riding was damaged, and in one instance Cruz himself was injured. Cruz wrote:

> Last week on four successive days in four different cities, my followers and I were physically harassed by Sandinista mobs as we tried to meet indoors with our organizers. The mobs (or *turbas*) brandished steel clubs and machetes. I, myself, was hit in the face with a rock, spat upon, and grabbed by the hair. To my shock, the international press headlined these incidents by referring to Sandinista "police protection." They failed to report that this "protection" arrived three hours late in Leon. And it goes without saying that such "protection" would be unnecessary if the government was not organizing mob violence against us.[12]

Despite this persecution, Cruz continued to strive for a political opening that would allow the democratic opposition to participate in Nicaragua's political life. He consistently called upon the Sandinistas to grant the conditions needed for honest elections. During a meeting of the Socialist International in Rio de Janeiro in early October, Cruz met with Comandante Bayardo Arce in an effort to reach an agreement. Just when a resolution seemed at hand, however, Arce broke off the negotiations and publicly rejected any further discussion.

The Conduct of the Elections

Six parties in addition to the Sandinistas did register to participate in the elections. Three shared the Sandinistas' Communist ideology: the Nicaraguan Socialist Party, allied with the FSLN; the Communist Party of Nicaragua; and the Popular Action Movement—Marxist/Leninist. The fourth, the Popular Social Christian Party, also was officially allied with the FSLN. The fifth, the Independent Liberal Party, had been allied with the FSLN but left the alliance in early 1984. The remaining party, the Democratic Conservative Party (PCD), was a rump faction infiltrated by the Sandinistas which, with govern-

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[11] Cruz had been a prominent figure during the revolution. He was one of "The Twelve" (*Los Doce*), a group of opposition leaders who had spoken out openly and helped to undermine the Somoza regime. Following the revolution, he served first as president of the Central Bank, and in 1980 became a member of the ruling junta. In 1981, he was appointed Nicaragua's Ambassador to the United States. He grew disillusioned with the direction in which the Sandinista leadership was steering the revolution and resigned.

[12] Arturo Cruz, "Can the Sandinistas Hold a Fair Election?" *Washington Post*, September 28, 1984, p. A21.

Sandinista *turbas* in Chinandega attempted to disrupt a rally by opposition candidate Arturo Cruz during the 1984 election campaign.

ment complicity, had gained control of that party's banner.

These six parties—including the FSLN's allies—suffered harassment and repeated interference with their campaign activities. The Sandinista army, police, and security forces frequently detained members of these parties for performing routine campaign activities authorized by the Electoral Law. The Sandinista military sometimes drafted leaders of the local youth chapters of these parties. The CDS denied ration cards to some non-FSLN party activists. The CDS and other Sandinista mass organizations frequently harassed and intimidated the members of these parties, often resorting to physical violence.

Although they received some state financing, the six parties found it extremely difficult to purchase even minimal supplies of needed campaign materials such as paper, ink, and paint. The mobility of the parties was restricted by the official gasoline ration system, which allocated only 20 gallons per vehicle per month. In contrast, the FSLN suffered no shortages and blanketed Managua and other urban areas with flashy billboards, swaths of red and black paint (the FSLN party colors), and Sandinista leaflets. Government trucks transported FSLN party activists, oblivious to the gas rationing. While the registered parties were hard pressed to obtain even the most basic campaign materials, the FSLN adorned the major streets of Managua with lighted revolving signs.

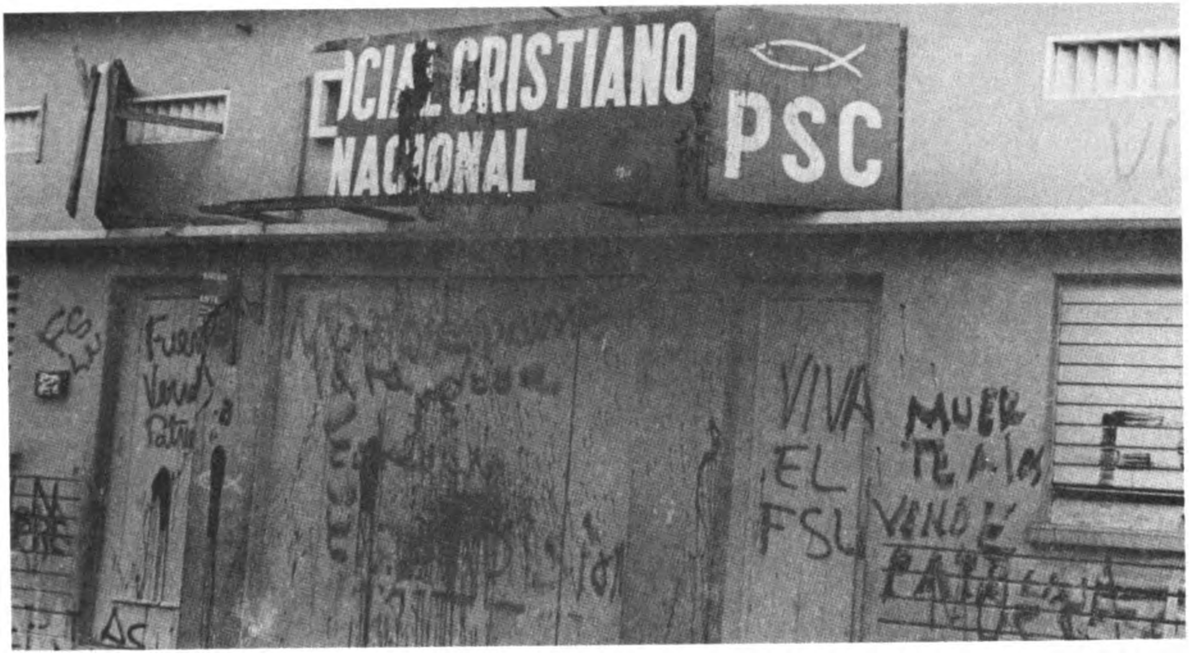
Independent Liberal Party (PLI) candidate Virgilio Godoy protested to the Supreme Electoral Council that on the very first day of the campaign, August 1, 1984, the Sandinista military detained 15 youths for distributing PLI materials. Godoy noted that his party's Secretary General for the Matagalpa Department had been violently taken from his home on July 27 simply for having hired a car with loudspeakers to urge citizens to register to vote. Elsewhere, Sandinista authorities interrogated two PLI leaders and confiscated their campaign materials. Godoy charged on August 7 that PLI activists in Esteli, Malpaisillo, Nagarote, Jinotega, and Leon had been victims of attacks by members of the Sandinista army and that there had been a systematic destruction of campaign materials that the party had obtained with great difficulty. In September, the PLI again protested to the Supreme Electoral Council the way the electoral process was being carried out, noting both the failure of the government to make sufficient campaign supplies available and the Supreme Electoral Council's failure to prevent FSLN activists from committing campaign abuses. The PLI charged that government-run radio stations were violating the Electoral Law by refusing to carry PLI advertisements and accused the FSLN of using its control of the armed forces and educational institutions to intimidate and indoctrinate the Nicaraguan people. On October 21, the PLI decided to withdraw completely from the elections, but the Sandinista-controlled Supreme Electoral Council ruled that the party must remain on the ballot.

The Democratic Conservative Party (PCD) encountered similar problems and was equally critical of the electoral process. In a letter to the Supreme Electoral Council, the PCD charged that the FSLN diverted government goods and supplies for its political purposes and that it was denying the opposition proper access to the media. Later that month, the Coordinator of the PCD threatened that the party would pull out of the election unless 150 of his party's activists were freed from detention; those listed included the president and national secretary of the PCD youth, two members of the PCD's National Executive Council, and various PCD farm worker leaders. (Subsequently, the government did release some 25 PCD activists.) On October 7, a *turba* armed with sticks, chains, and rocks broke up the ceremonies marking the opening of the PCD's headquarters in Jinotepe, wounding several party members and destroying the party's rented bus. The party Coordinator charged that vehicles belonging to the government and the FSLN ferried the *turba* to the PCD's headquarters. While some Sandinista leaders urged their supporters not to resort to violence, the FSLN official organ *Barricada* printed an editorial by Onofre Guevara, an FSLN delegate to the Council of State, justifying the *turba's* actions; Guevara asserted that the registered parties had provoked this violent reaction by offending the political dignity of the Nicaraguan people with their claims that they offered a genuine alternative to the revolution. A few days before the elections, a PCD convention was about to vote on withdrawing from the campaign when a group of youths—widely believed to be under Sandinista orders—stormed into the room and broke up the meeting.

The Popular Social Christian Party (PPSC), technically an ally of the FSLN, also was critical of the Sandinistas. In a declaration published August 7, 1984, the PPSC declared that it had "not found any sign on the

William Gentile/Picture Group

Arturo Cruz after the *turbas* attacked his vehicle during the election campaign in September 1984. Cruz, once a member of the revolutionary junta and later ambassador to the United States, is now in exile and has become a leader of the United Nicaraguan Opposition.



The Social Christian Party headquarters in Managua has also been attacked by the *turbas*.

part of the ruling party or its organizations that they meant to honor in practice the guarantees they have offered." The PPSC condemned the FSLN's exploitation of its control of the media for its own benefit. The declaration stated that "repressive organisms of the state" had begun to send "shock forces" out to interfere with the campaign process and added that PPSC activists in Matagalpa had been directly threatened by members of the government's State Security apparatus.

The Marxist parties running in the election fared little better. The Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), the FSLN's closest ally, protested in August that party members had had their ration cards revoked by the local Sandinista Defense Committee (CDS) because of their involvement in the political campaign and that four PSN activists had been arrested by Sandinista authorities for distributing campaign materials. The Popular Action Movement-Marxist/Leninist (MAP-ML) also sent a letter to the Supreme Electoral Council in August protesting Sandinista interference with its campaign activities.

The registered parties attempted to work together to offset the FSLN's dominant position. In early August, a PSN leader disclosed that his party had joined the PLI, PPSC, PCD, and PCdeN in signing a letter to the FSLN insisting that the minimal conditions for free elections did not exist in Nicaragua and appealed for the lifting of the State of Emergency and the reinstatement of civil liberties. The six parties repeatedly met as a group with the FSLN seeking to resolve problems concerning the acquisition of campaign materials and to curb FSLN abuses, but each time the talks broke down when the Sandinistas refused to take corrective action.

The Sandinistas' exploitation of the television system illustrated how they manipulated and abused the electoral laws during the campaign. While they had enjoyed unlimited access to television for more than five years, they restricted the other parties to less than five minutes per day.

Television coverage of the various parties' nominations of their candidates demonstrates how the Sandinistas took unfair advantage of their rivals. The non-FSLN parties were mentioned on television only briefly, if at all, and then usually in derogatory terms. In contrast, the Sandinista Television System broadcast live the entire two-hour session of the Sandinista Assembly on July 17 when the FSLN's candidates were named. Interior Minister Borge delivered the keynote speech—ignoring Article 63 of the Electoral Law which expressly forbade members of the Sandinista Armed Forces on active duty from engaging in political activities. Rene Nunez, Secretary of the National Directorate, then read the names of the FSLN's presidential and vice presidential candidates and those of each of the 90 candidates to the National Assembly and their alternates. Presidential candidate Daniel Ortega then made a lengthy speech describing the FSLN's platform. In this one program, the Sandinistas used as much air time as the other participating parties were allowed in the entire first month of the campaign. Since technically the campaign had not yet commenced, this television time was not charged against the Sandinistas' allotment.

SOCIALISMO DEMOCRATICO
FSLN
MUERAN
Vigilado
Daniel
FSLN

The Sandinistas have also directed their *turbas* against the Social Democratic Party.

The commitment to hold free and fair elections had been an essential factor in the formation of the broad-based coalition that overthrew Somoza. Many of the groups that had joined with the Sandinistas in 1979 did so in the belief that the Nicaraguan people would be given an opportunity to freely elect their leaders and the type of government they wanted. The Sandinistas robbed the people of this opportunity. By thwarting efforts by other parties to effectively compete in the November 4 elections, the FSLN assured its own victory. When the votes were counted, the Sandinistas had won the presidency and 61 of 96 seats in the National Assembly.

The "new" government took power on January 10, 1985. The elections accomplished little more than a change of titles for the leading Sandinistas. Junta Coordinator Ortega became President, junta member Sergio Ramirez became Vice President, and Council of State President Carlos Nunez became National Assembly President. The Cabinet remained virtually intact. The nine-member FSLN National Directorate continued to be the locus of power in Nicaragua.[13]

Post-Election Repression of Political Parties

While the Sandinistas were taking office, virtually all other political parties in Nicaragua issued a joint communique condemning the elections. The nine parties—the Communists, Socialists, Popular Social Christians, Social Christians, Social Democrats, Independent Liberals, Liberal Constitutionalists, Democratic Conservatives, and Conservatives—agreed that the elections had done nothing to resolve the country's deepening crisis and stated that fundamental liberties needed for political forces to pursue democratic actions were absent. They called upon the FSLN to begin a dialogue aimed at reaching a national consensus. The Sandinistas rebuffed this appeal.

Since January 10, 1985, the Sandinistas have labored to marginalize Nicaragua's other parties. In the National Assembly, they have used their majority to ensure total control over the drafting of the new constitution. While other parties and organizations have technically been "consulted," their proposals and objections have been ignored.[14]

Ratification of the October 15 State of Emergency exemplifies the Sandinistas' heavy-handedness in ramming legislation through the National Assembly. The Democratic Conservatives boycotted the October 30 session during which the decree was discussed. The Independent Liberals denounced the decree and walked out. The Socialists and Communists joined the Independent Liberals in a statement condemning the new State of Emergency.[15] In the end, the Sandinistas were alone, using their majority to enact this repressive law over the strong objections of the nation's other political parties.

Direct Sandinista harassment and persecution of opposition political groups have continued unabated. In the weeks immediately following the 1984 elections, repression reached unprecedented levels as opposition political leaders—as well as private sector and labor figures—were threatened and prevented from leaving the country.

Periodically throughout 1985, party leaders were summoned by the secret police, questioned about their activities, and issued stern warnings. In February 1985, the Democratic Coordinating Board called for a national dialogue mediated by the Catholic Church. In early March, the principal groups of the armed resistance made a similar proposal. The Sandinistas rejected any possibility of negotiations. They promptly called in Democratic Coordinating Board president Eduardo Rivas Gasteazoro, COSEP president Enrique Bolanos, COSEP vice president Ramiro Gurdian, Nicaraguan Conservative Party president Mario Rappaccioli, Social Christian

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[13] For a comprehensive analysis of the elections, see Robert S. Leiken, "The Nicaraguan Tangle," *New York Times Review of Books*, December 5, 1985, pp. 55–64.

[14] "The Sandinista Charter," *Foreign Report*, February 21, 1985, p. 3.

[15] The parties of democratic opposition who refused to participate in the 1984 election uniformly opposed the State of Emergency but are not represented in the National Assembly.

Party vice president Erick Ramirez, Social Democratic Party president Luis Rivas Leiva, and *La Prensa* director Jaime Chamorro (among others) to be interrogated and threatened.[16]

Following the October 15 expanded State of Emergency, many political leaders were targets of the new crackdown. Prominent opposition figures such as Eduardo Rivas Gasteazoro, Erick Ramirez, and Luis Rivas Leiva were taken to the secret police jail at El Chipote, fingerprinted, photographed, and subjected to intense interrogation and verbal abuse by DGSE chief Lenin Cerna. Concurrently, Vice Minister of Interior Carrion publicly identified the civic opposition as a main target of the expanded State of Emergency and accused them of being "agents" of imperialism who were undermining the revolution by participating in "open, cynical, and insolent political activity."[17]

C. The Labor Movement

The Sandinistas, attempting to portray the organized labor movement as one of the pillars supporting their new Marxist society, repeatedly have proclaimed that they are acting on behalf of the country's workers. In fact, they have worked against the interests of workers and have sought to take over or destroy independent unions and substitute unions controlled by the FSLN.

The "Law of State of Economic and Social Emergency" of September 1981 outlawed strikes. During the 1984 "relaxation" that accompanied the electoral campaign, the Sandinistas announced that this right was among those being restored. When unions—including some belonging to FSLN confederations—attempted to call strikes, however, the government quickly intervened and ordered the strikers back to work. FSLN National Directorate member Victor Tirado, the *comandante* assigned responsibility for labor matters, declared on September 9, 1984: "the strike as a weapon, as a political instrument of the working class, has already passed into history." This de facto ban continued until October 15, 1985, when, under the expanded State of Emergency, strikes were again made officially illegal.

Another Sandinista policy that has adversely affected workers is the institution of the National System of Organizations of Labor and Salaries (SNOTS). Under this program, the government sets the wage level for all workers in the country. But the official wage scale has not kept pace with the country's rampant inflation and under this system Nicaragua's workers have suffered a sharp drop in real wages.

Before the revolution, the Nicaraguan labor movement was dominated by the Somoza regime. Most unions were affiliated with the Somoza-controlled confederation, and the various independent unions were routinely harassed and suppressed by Somoza. The Sandinistas have followed and expanded upon Somoza's methods. They have absorbed most of the formerly pro-Somoza unions into their confederations and founded hundreds of new unions; like other FSLN "mass organizations," these unions have not functioned to serve the interests of their members but rather as mechanisms by which the Sandinistas have extended their pervasive control over the population. At the same time, the Sandinistas have persecuted the independent labor organizations to ensure that they do not become rival centers of power.

The two principal FSLN labor organizations are the Sandinista Workers Central (CST), primarily for urban laborers, and the Rural Workers Association (ATC) for farm laborers. (The CST is a member of the Moscow-led World Federation of Trade Unions—WFTU.) Sandinista groups have been formed for specific occupations such as government employees, teachers, journalists, and health workers. In 1980, the Sandinistas formed the National Union Coordinator (CSN) which they intended as an umbrella organization encompassing all Nicaragua's labor unions. Some Marxist unions not linked to the FSLN have joined the CSN, but the democratic confederations are independent.

The Sandinistas have unleashed the full force of their repressive mechanism on those unions that have not fallen into line. The secret police have detained hundreds of union leaders and activists—holding many for prolonged periods—and have sought to intimidate them through physical abuse and threats. Sandinista *turbas* have physically attacked union leaders and activists and have defaced their homes. State-run firms have coerced employees to join Sandinista unions, and those who have refused have been fired and blacklisted. The Labor Ministry has consistently favored Sandinista over non-Sandinista unions, granting the Sandinista groups legal standing and the official right to represent workers while excluding independent unions.

The Confederation for Labor Unification (CUS) is one of Nicaragua's two principal democratic labor organizations. It is affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the Inter-American Regional Workers Organization (ORIT). The CUS is not tied to any political party, but its independent policies and its cooperation with the American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL–CIO) and the American Institute for Free Labor

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[16] "Nicaragua Calls in Opposition Leaders: 10 Who Signed Document Summoned to Security Headquarters," *Washington Post*, March 10, 1985, p. A19; "Sandinistas warn opponents," *Washington Times*, March 11, 1985, p. 5A.

[17] See William R. Long, "Questioned About 'Plot,' Sandinista Foe Says," *Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1985, p. 15; and Edward Cody, "Sandinistas Interrogate Opponents; 300 Reportedly Held for Questioning," *Washington Post*, December 15, 1985, p. A1.

CHINANDEGA
ALIMENTOS
AL ESTOMA
CUS
OBREROS Y
CAMPESINOS
UNIDOS EN LA CUS
LEON

Sandinista Police block a May Day march by independent labor organizations.

Development (AIFLD) have made it a prime target for Sandinista harassment and persecution:[18]

- In 1981, the Sandinistas conducted a major propaganda campaign labeling the CUS an agent of the CIA; the director of the local AIFLD office left Nicaragua under heavy pressure. In June 1983, AIFLD was compelled to close its Managua office entirely.
- Shortly after the revolution, the Stevedores Union at the Pacific port of Corinto aligned itself with the Sandinista CST. The stevedores grew increasingly disenchanted by CST policies, however, and sought to switch to CUS. Successive union leaders were harassed by the Sandinistas, and some fled into exile. In the spring of 1983, the union hall was occupied by the Sandinistas. A union election was scheduled for June 1 to resolve the matter conclusively. The Sandinistas packed the meeting place with hundreds of persons who were not union members, including many who were not even from Corinto. Although a clear violation of the union's by-laws, the Labor Ministry sanctioned the vote and recognized the Sandinista candidates as the union's duly elected leaders. The traditional leaders held a separate assembly in the union hall, a meeting the Sandinista press scorned as a "black mass." Within days, the union's traditional leaders were arrested, and numerous others were fired. In August, the union leaders were released, and some subsequently went into exile.
- In February 1984, the Sandinistas involved a CUS union in a campaign orchestrated against one of their principal political opponents, COSEP president Enrique Bolanos. Although CUS had a functioning union at Bolanos's SAIMSA cotton plant, the Sandinistas' ATC complained that Bolanos was illegally blocking the creation of an ATC affiliate. The Labor Ministry sided with the ATC, and the FSLN bused supporters from government-run enterprises to demonstrate in front of SAIMSA.
- On May Day, 1984, the Sandinistas targeted the inauguration of a CUS seamstress school in Managua. A *turba* drove away the CUS officials and prospective students and then ransacked the school.
- On August 19, 1984, CUS national headquarters were occupied by a small group of dissidents backed by the FSLN. On August 25, the dissidents, assisted by a group of young Sandinistas, started a fight with CUS members. The government used the incident as a pretext for the Interior Ministry to occupy temporarily the CUS offices.

The Nicaraguan Workers Central (CTN), a Social Christian-oriented organization affiliated with the Latin American Workers Central (CLAT), is the country's other democratic labor confederation. Like CUS, the CTN has suffered repeated acts of persecution (including physical violence and loss of employment) to coerce workers to switch their affiliation to a Sandinista union and to coerce whole unions to sever their ties with the

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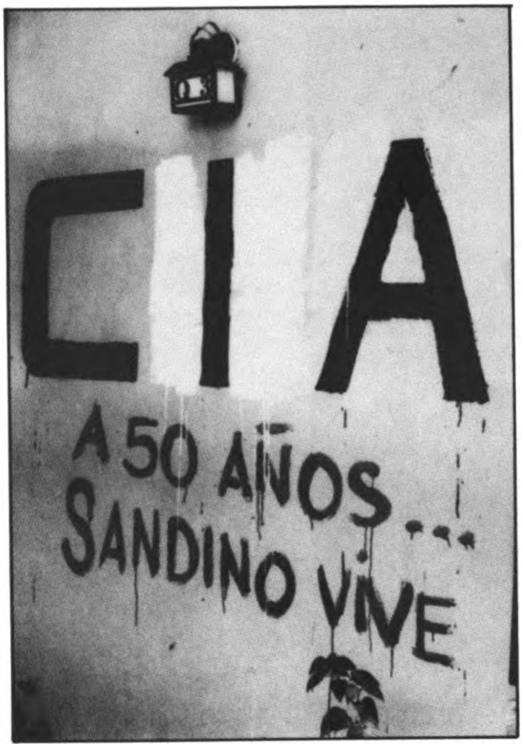
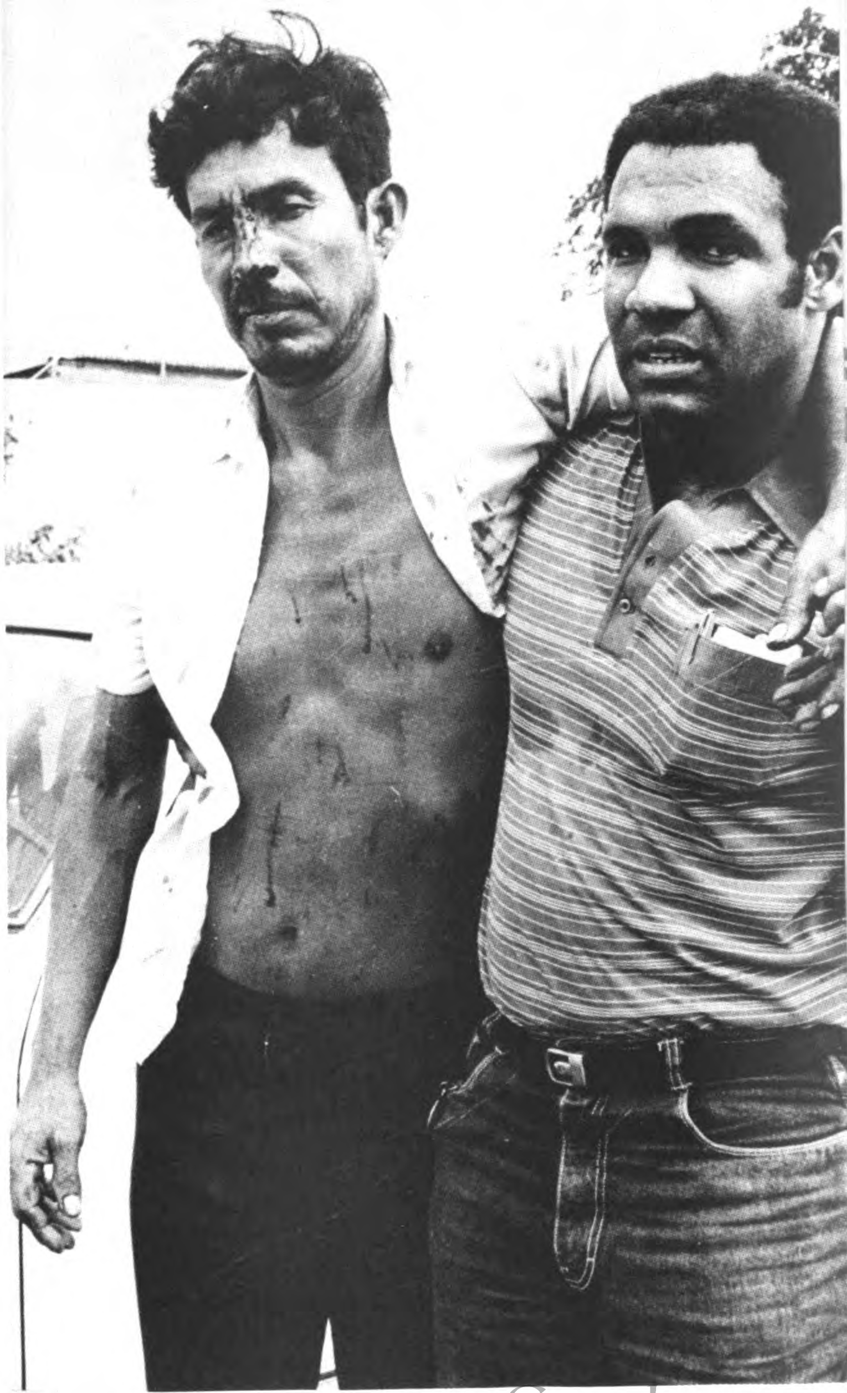
[18] William C. Doherty, "A Revolution Betrayed: Free Labor Persecuted," *AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (March 1984), pp. 1-3, 8. See Annex 8.



The CUS has been a special target for Sandinista harassment because of its ties with the AFL-CIO and its American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). The Sandinistas denounce CUS as a CIA front, and here the *turbas* have defaced the CUS headquarters.



CUS Secretary General Alvin Guthrie assists a CUS member following the Sandinista attack.

In August 1984, the Sandinistas provoked a fight with members of the independent Confederation for Labor Unification (CUS). The government used the incident as a pretext for the Interior Ministry to temporarily occupy the CUS national headquarters.

CTN and join the CST or some other Sandinista confederation. The Sandinistas also exploited an internal rift within the CTN to divide and weaken the organization. Shortly after the October 15 expanded State of Emergency, Sandinista forces occupied the CTN headquarters in Managua and detained several union leaders.

While the democratic labor organizations have borne the brunt of Sandinista persecution, not even Nicaragua's non-FSLN Marxist confederations have escaped harassment. The Sandinistas have cracked down on the leaders of these unions whenever they strayed too far from the official line. On October 19, 1985, for example, the secret police arrested Alejandro Solorzano, Secretary General of the Independent General Confederation of Workers (CGTI), because he was engaged in a hunger strike protesting low wages.[19] In explaining Solorzano's arrest, Interior Minister Borge declared that he had "committed actions contrary to the methods used in a revolutionary country."

As a result of numerous complaints filed against Nicaragua, the International Labor Organization (ILO) sent a representative to Nicaragua in 1983 to investigate the situation. In March 1984, on the basis of the report of this mission, the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association voiced its "serious concern" over the large number of trade unionists and employer representatives arrested in Nicaragua and pointed out that "freedom of association can only be exercised" where fundamental human rights and in particular "freedom from arbitrary

The Nicaraguan Workers Central (CTN) has also been persecuted by the Sandinistas. CTN Secretary General Carlos Huembes was attacked by a *turba* in February 1981.

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[19] The CGTI is affiliated with the Moscow-line Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN). See Juan O. Tamayo, "Nicaraguan labor strife heats up," *Miami Herald*, November 11, 1985, p. 15.

CHICHIGALPA
AUSENTE POR
IMPEDIMENTO
DEL. GOBIERNO

CTN official Jose Altamirano, seen here being harassed by Sandinista Police, was arrested in January 1986 and held for several weeks.

arrest, are fully respected and guaranteed." The committee also called on the Nicaraguan Government to "create an atmosphere conducive to the resolution of... difficulties" among workers and not to interfere in the resolution of such difficulties.

A Nicaraguan labor unionist now in exile as a result of Sandinista harassment summed up the current situation:

> For twenty years we had fought against the Somoza nightmare. Our resistance, bent at times, was never broken. We denounced the harassments, tortures, and human and trade union rights violations. The price we paid was more torture, jailings, dismissals from jobs, and death. Finally our struggle was over and the Somoza dictatorship overthrown, and we thought that everything we fought for would now become a reality.
>
> Four and one-half years after the takeover by the [FSLN], the democratic labor movement finds itself in a very serious predicament. We never dreamed that our labor leaders and workers would be put in jail again in great numbers; we never dreamed that the campaign by the government against our movement would be so vicious; we never dreamed that our workers and their families would be brought to ridicule by long-time friends and neighbors who now serve on block committees for the defense of the revolution [CDS], and it was beyond our wildest dreams that we would be asking once again about the *desaparecidos* (the missing).[20]

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[20] Doherty, "Revolution Betrayed," p. 8. For further information on the situation of Nicaraguan workers, see Sam Leiken, "Labor Under Siege," *The New Republic*, October 8, 1984, p. 18; and "Sandinista Deception Reaffirmed: Nicaragua Coverup Of Trade Union Repression," American Institute for Free Labor Development, August 30, 1985. See also Annex 9.

VII. The Indians and Creoles of the Atlantic Coast

Historically, Zelaya Province on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua has been inhabited by perhaps 150,000 to 165,000 Miskito, Sumo, and Rama Indians indigenous to the area plus a lesser number of blacks or creoles whose ancestors were brought to the region while it was a British protectorate. The predominant languages of the area are the native Miskito dialect and English. In their ethnic background, religion, language, culture, and economics, the inhabitants of the Atlantic Coast differ markedly from the Hispanic people of western Nicaragua.

Under the Somozas, the central government in Managua generally left the Indians and creoles alone. Not dependent on a cash economy, the Indians maintained a high degree of self-sufficiency and self-government. On the village level, the government was basically democratic, with both tribal and church leaders being elected.

Following the revolution in 1979, the Sandinistas attempted to upset this relationship by imposing an unprecedented degree of state control over the Atlantic Coast region. Their policies clashed with the desire of the peoples of the Atlantic Coast to preserve their unique cultural identity, their community organizations, and their traditional economy. To defend these family and community traditions against forced cultural, political, and economic assimilation and to retain control of their own lands and natural resources, the Indians and creoles sought to maintain their traditional autonomy from the central government.

Friction between the FSLN and the Indians began soon after the revolution, when Sandinistas and their Cuban advisers began moving into the Atlantic Coast area in large numbers. They brought with them their Communist government apparatus and "mass organizations" such as the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS) which disrupted existing political and social patterns. The FSLN disbanded the existing Miskito organization ALPROMISU, substituting a new group known as MISURASATA (an acronym for "Miskito, Sumo, Rama, and Sandinista Unity"). The Sandinistas ignored the Indian leaders' demands for some form of autonomy.

As resistance to the Sandinistas developed, some incidents of violence occurred. In early 1981, the Sandinistas jailed and tortured numerous MISURASATA leaders in an effort to quell this unrest. These actions only served to escalate the conflict, however, and small groups began armed resistance against the Sandinistas.[1]

In December 1981, the Sandinista army and State Security forces in Northern Zelaya launched an operation against rebel Miskitos who had formed the MISURA Indian organization. These government forces detained large numbers of Miskitos, including many women and children. In the villages of San Carlos and Leimus, the Sandinistas summarily executed dozens of prisoners and buried them in mass graves.[2]

In January and February 1982, citing "security dangers," the government rounded up more than 8,000 Indians living in villages near the Honduran border and moved them to "relocation camps" in the interior. This forced evacuation of the Miskitos was carried out in a brutal fashion, with Sandinista troops often rousting the Indians out of their beds late at night with no warning and then forcing them at gunpoint to march to the resettlement camps. The villages themselves were razed so that the Indians would have nothing to go back to, and many Miskitos who resisted or could not make the march were killed. In the face of this unprecedented repression, thousands of Miskitos fled to Honduras or Costa Rica.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights report on the Sandinistas' mistreatment of the Miskitos stated:

> In the period between January 1 and February 20, 1982, the relocation of approximately 8,500 people was effected. Approximately half of the Rio Coco region population fled to Honduras, fearing that their lives were in danger....
>
> The relocation in Tasba Pri [a Sandinista "relocation camp"] of some Miskitos, and the flight to Honduras of others, uprooted the Miskitos from the banks of the Coco River, where they had lived from time immemorial, resulting in the division of numerous towns and entire families, the destruction of their homes, the loss of their livestock and, in some cases, all of their belongings. The Miskito structure of authority was undermined and later

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[1] See Alan Riding, "Nicaraguan Indians Clash With Regime," *New York Times*, June 18, 1981, p. A2. See also Annex 11 for a complaint filed by MISURASATA with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

[2] The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights viewed the Leimus incident as a serious violation of the right to life. It called upon the Nicaraguan Government to conduct a thorough investigation and punish those responsible. It found the Sandinistas' response to its request to be "unsatisfactory." Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, *Report on the Situation of Human Rights of a Segment of the Nicaraguan Population of Miskito Origin*, 1984, p. 97. See also *Inside the Sandinista Regime: A Special Investigator's Perspective*, United States Department of State, February 1986.

> dissolved *de facto* as a result of the repression of the MISURASATA leaders, who were accused of "counterrevolutionary" activities....
>
> Hundreds of Miskitos have been arbitrarily detained without any formalities and under vague accusations of carrying out "counterrevolutionary activities"; many of these detentions have been followed by prolonged periods of incommunicado imprisonment and in some cases the Commission has verified that torture and abuse took place.[3]

The report also noted cases of illegal arrest and detention and approximately 70 disappearances linked to government security forces.[4]

Conditions in the relocation camps vary. The Sandinistas have attempted to turn the Tasba Pri camp into a model settlement to impress visiting groups. However, even there the Miskitos lead a bare existence and long to return to their homeland and traditional life style. At other camps, conditions are far worse. One camp in Jinotega was described by Indian rights attorney and activist Steve Tullberg: "Conditions were unfit for pigs." He depicted housing as "sheds that measured 12 by 30 feet—with 20 to 30 people in each." He reported that food was tightly rationed and that the Indians were forced to produce for the state.[5]

The Sandinistas have been ruthless in their efforts to defeat the Miskito resistance. For example, in July 1982, the army and the DGSE began further military and repressive civil actions in the Miskito Indian communities in the Seven-Bank and Puerto Cabezas areas. During the military actions, large numbers of Miskitos fled their towns. Many of them were captured and then killed by the army; others were interrogated first and then shot. Of those who stayed in their town, hundreds were taken prisoner.[6]

Continuing Sandinista repression in Zelaya has caused repeated waves of emigration. For example, in December 1983, the entire population of the village of Francia Sirpe (about 1,000 people) fled on foot to Honduras when they learned that they were about to be relocated. In an action typical of their practice of spreading false information, the Sandinistas charged that the Miskitos had been "kidnapped" by counterrevolutionaries. The outside world learned the truth about the "Christmas March," however, when Catholic Bishop Salvador Shlaefer, who had been in Francia Sirpe on a routine pastoral visit at the time of the evacuation and accompanied the Miskitos during their escape, revealed that the Miskitos had left voluntarily and that resistance forces had only provided security against attacks on the villagers by Sandinista troops. (Inside Nicaragua, the Sandinistas have suppressed the facts and still refer to this incident as a kidnapping.)

Among other cases of mass exodus was the April 1984 flight of some 600 Miskitos from the Sandy Bay region of Zelaya to refuge in Honduras. In this case, too, the Sandinistas alleged that the Miskitos were "kidnapped" by resistance forces.

Repressive Sandinista policies have brought a cultural calamity to the people of Zelaya. Many Miskito and Sumo villages have been totally destroyed, with their inhabitants killed, relocated, or driven away. A fourth of the Indians have been placed in relocation camps such as Tasba Pri or have fled to refugee camps in Honduras or Costa Rica. Indian rights to self-government, land, or control over natural resources have been abolished by the Sandinista government. Subsistence farming, fishing, and hunting are strictly controlled, and have disappeared in many areas. Freedom of movement has been severely and arbitrarily restricted. Access to staple foods is so limited that hunger has become a constant problem. With the undermining of the Moravian Church's humanitarian activities, many villages have been forced to go without medicine, doctors, or pastors. In many cases canoes (a major method of transport in this seashore area) have been confiscated or their use prohibited.[7]

Despite their repressive policies, Sandinistas failed to subdue the Miskitos. Faced with their inability to defeat the Miskito resistance and global condemnation of their actions toward these people, the Sandinistas modified their strategy. By late 1983, they began to admit "past errors" in dealing with the Miskitos and released hundreds of Miskito prisoners. The following year, they began to negotiate with certain Miskito leaders on the question of regional autonomy. In 1985, they began to allow some Miskitos to leave the relocation camps to return to their traditional villages.

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[3] Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, *Report on the Situation of Human Rights of a Segment of the Nicaraguan Population of Miskito Origin*, 1984, pp. 129–30.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 130. See also The International League for Human Rights, *Nicaragua's Human Rights Record*, March 1983, pp. 5–6. Americas Watch has also noted that the government has failed to account for the 70 disappeared Miskitos. It has confirmed accounts of torture and other abuse of Miskito prisoners. In its April 1984 report, it stated:

> We understand that some of the allegations of mistreatment of Miskito defendants that we noted in our earlier reports have now been confirmed, after the victims have been released by operation of the amnesty decree. Those abuses included food and water deprivation for several days; forcing the victims to stand for many hours; and physical threats against the lives of the victims. Some of them have suffered simulations of shootings and some were dangled out of the helicopters in flight. (pp. 28–29.)

[5] " 'Free Land' is called a concentration camp," *Detroit News*, November 26, 1984, p. 1.

[6] See *Inside the Sandinista Regime.*

[7] See *Nicaragua's Human Rights Record*, pp. 5–6. See also Annex 11 for reports by Bernard Nietschmann, a professor at the University of California at Berkeley.

During 1985, the government repeatedly announced that autonomy negotiations were proceeding well. In fact, the talks have made no progress. Even Miskitos who favored negotiations now view them with increasing skepticism. Events such as the January 1985 attack by Sandinista forces on a Miskito village being visited by Brooklyn Rivera, an Indian leader with whom the government had been discussing regional autonomy, and the June death under mysterious circumstances of another Miskito leader, Eduardo Pantin, who had gone to Puerto Cabezas to negotiate with local Sandinista officials, made them question the FSLN's sincerity.[8] In view of the Sandinistas' record in the region and their unwillingness to grant terms that would make autonomy a reality, ever more Indians judge the negotiations as simply another FSLN attempt to deceive and divide the Indian people.[9]

To promote the appearance of reconciliation, government leaders such as Vice Interior Minister Omar Cabezas admitted "the revolutionary government and the FSLN committed an error in their treatment of the Indians." Interior Minister Borge announced that he had reached an accord with some independent rebel commanders for a ceasefire and would allow some of the relocated Indians to return to the northeastern border.[10] Neither of the two main Indian resistance organizations formally endorsed the accord, however, because there were no concrete assurances to respect Indian rights, and because they considered the accord to be a public relations maneuver designed to whitewash past treatment of the Miskitos.

In 1985, the Sandinistas did allow some 10,000 Miskitos to return to their traditional homeland. The conditions for these Miskitos were very poor, however. They found that their villages had been partially destroyed and needed to be rebuilt. They suffered from food shortages and malnutrition, and were still subject to restrictions on movement and ownership of property. By December, some of those who returned were crossing into Honduras at a rate of about 50 individuals per week. The Sandinistas acknowledged that serious problems persisted, but they blamed bad weather, military activity, and economic conditions for having hampered the government's resettlement project.[11]

Although Interior Minister Borge promised progress on the autonomy issue and noninterference in Miskito community life, by January 1986 FSLN troops were reinforcing garrisons based near the Coco River communities. By February there were reports of young Miskitos being forcibly conscripted into the Sandinista army. On March 25 and 26, Sandinista soldiers attacked three border villages, causing over 10,000 inhabitants all along the Coco River to seek refuge in Honduras. The troops bombarded the villages with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, and tank attacks, while Indian combatants struggled to repel them with light arms. The action signaled an end to an uneasy truce between the Indians and the government, and boosted the number of Nicaraguan Indian refugees living in Honduras to some 36,000.

Even as they acknowledged the failure of their resettlement policies in the Atlantic Coast region, the Sandinistas launched a new program of forced relocation elsewhere in the country. On March 10, 1985, President Ortega announced that the government would begin the evacuation of 7,000 families from the northern departments. The head of the government's social services agency later estimated that 50,000 people would be moved in 1985 as part of a program that could ultimately affect 200,000–250,000 individuals. According to Sandinista officials, the purpose of the program was twofold: to deprive resistance forces of local support by removing relatives and neighbors sympathetic to them from war zones; and to create "free-fire zones," where the Sandinista army could operate freely. The CPDH holds that another objective of the forced relocations is to create new dependence on the government by compelling the inhabitants to live in resettlement camps where they must accept government indoctrination and policies in order to survive.[12]

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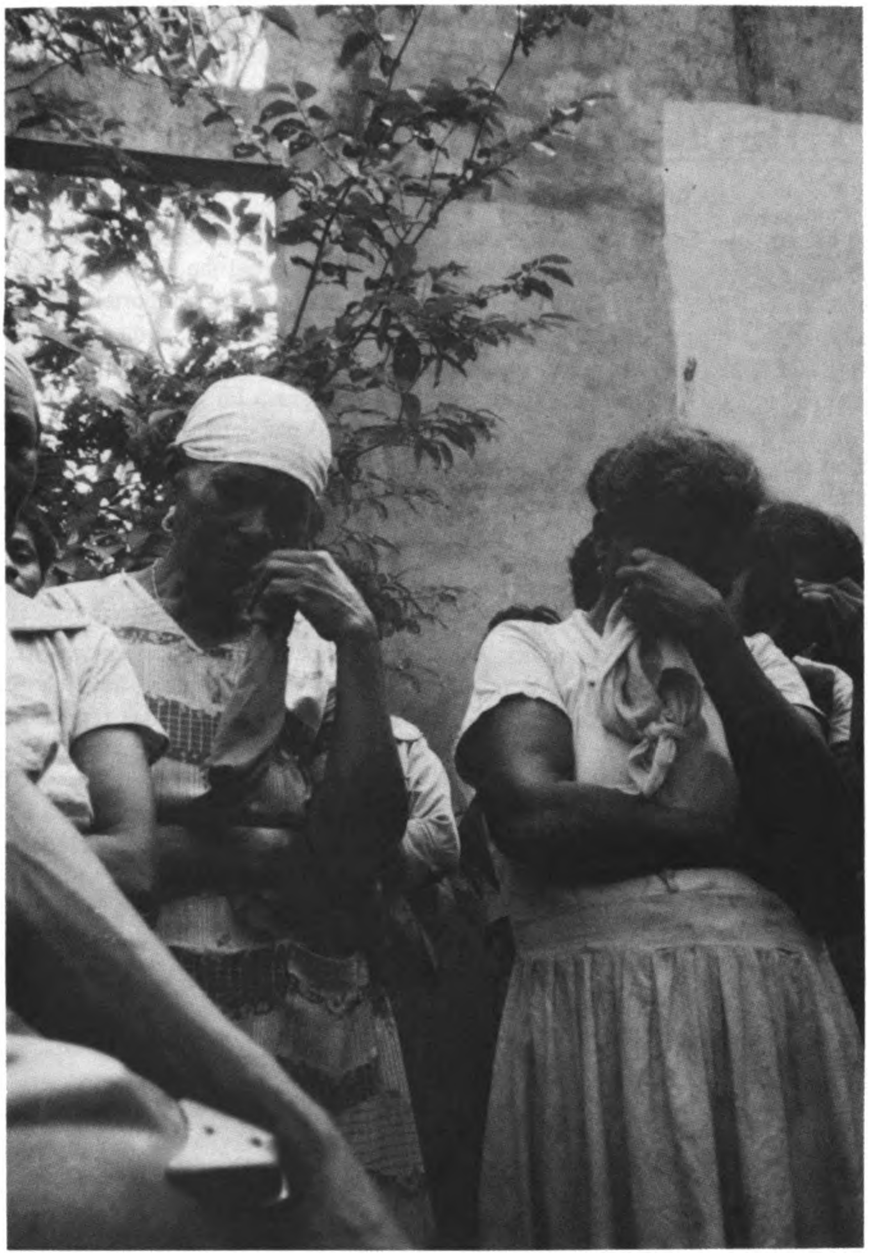
[8] See Guy Gugliotta, "Stop bombing of Indian villages, rebel leader urges Sandinistas," *Miami Herald*, January 12, 1985, p. 18. See also Annex 11.

[9] "Sandinista gesture: more than meets the eye," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 3, 1985, p. 23.

[10] Only some 10,000 Indians resettled in the Tasba Pri complex were allowed to return home. Others, who had been relocated to camps northeast of Jinotega and Matagalpa were not released. There are no accurate figures for the number of Indians held in these facilities, but some sources estimate the number close to 4,000.

[11] See Nancy Nusser, "Nicaragua's uprooted Indians," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 26, 1985, p. 16; Stephen Kinzer, "The Way Home Is Hard For Indians Of Nicaragua," *New York Times*, August 22, 1985, p. A2.

There is evidence that the Sandinistas have attacked villages under reconstruction, killing some of the returning Indians and forcing others into new relocation camps. For example, one Miskito leader has charged that on January 5, 1985, the residents of Columbus relocation camp were allowed to return to their village of Bihmuna to rebuild it. Ten days later, as the Indians were working on reconstruction, the village was bombed by Sandinista aircraft. It was completely destroyed and 12 villagers were killed. On February 12, 1985, the Sandinista army burned the villages of Halover, Waunta, Laya Siska, Kua Laya, and Tasbapauni, leaving 4,000 Miskitos homeless. About 2,000 fled into the jungles; 300 were captured and taken to a new relocation camp near Wawa. See statement by Congressman Bob Livingston, *Congressional Record*, April 4, 1985, pp. H1909–10.



Miskito Indian villagers attend a Moravian church service in Bilwaskarma. The damaged walls and missing roof of the sanctuary provoke bittter memories of destruction of property, arbitrary arrest, and forced relocation of Atlantic coast people.

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[12] The government describes those relocated as "displaced peasant families" who mobilized themselves in response to attacks by armed resistance forces and have sought security from the Sandinista government. Many peasants, however, have reported that Sandinista troops arrived in their towns and ordered the inhabitants to leave within 24 hours. In the northern town of Limay, evacuees and relief officers reported that homes of peasants were burned and animals killed to prevent the people from returning. One evacuation official claimed that some people had been evacuated only because they had relatives with the resistance forces and that others had been ordered to leave because the government had told them that it intended to bomb the area. See "Sandinistas Forcing Thousands Out Of War Zone," *New York Times*, March 19, 1985, p. A11; and Gary Moore, "The darker side of Nicaragua's revolution," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 28, 1985, p. C1.

VIII. Conclusion

In 1979, many Nicaraguans believed that the fall of the Somoza regime would usher in a bright new era in their nation's history. July 19 was a day of celebration, a day of hope that the revolution's dream of freedom and social justice would at last be realized. Today, that hope lies shattered, and the dream has been replaced by a nightmare of oppression and fear.

In their relentless drive to consolidate their power and transform Nicaragua into a Marxist-Leninist state aligned with the Soviet Union and Cuba, the leadership of the FSLN has betrayed the democratic Nicaraguans who once fought at their side, trampling on the rights of any who stood in their way. The Sandinistas have institutionalized murder, torture, arbitrary detention, mob violence, and censorship in their campaign to suppress all opposition. The long list of their victims includes leaders of political parties, the private sector, labor confederations, the churches, the Human Rights Commission, and the press, as well as thousands of ordinary Nicaraguans bitterly disillusioned by the direction in which the Sandinistas have led their nation.

Whereas Nicaragua was united in 1979, the Sandinistas' betrayal of the revolution has turned it into a divided nation. Sandinista actions have polarized the society, and every day more and more disenchanted Nicaraguans who once had supported the FSLN are now turning against it. As the ranks of their supporters dwindle and the level of discontent rises, the Sandinistas employ ever greater measures of repression against their own people to maintain their grasp on power. This very repression—the killings, the disappearances, the beatings, the secret police, the *turbas*, the CDS—only further alienates the Nicaraguan people.

In the face of Sandinista repression, the people of Nicaragua have few options. Many who have lost faith in the FSLN have chosen silence rather than risk provoking the Sandinistas' ruthless and pervasive security apparatus. Hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans—some 10 percent of the country's population—have chosen to flee into exile rather than submit to this repression. A few of the most courageous have accepted the price of open opposition and remain in Nicaragua waging a civic struggle to lead the revolution back to its original democratic goals. Some 20,000 have concluded that the Sandinistas have closed the doors to meaningful political participation and that armed resistance is the only way to regain the revolution the Communist *comandantes* of the FSLN have stolen from them.

ANNEXES

Annex 1

The Ramon Ordonez Ramirez Case

The case of Ramon ORDONEZ Ramirez is illustrative of the type of disappearances occurring under the Sandinistas. The first document presented here, a translation of a report by the Permanent Commission on Human (CPDH), provides an overview of Ordonez's arrest by agents of the Interior Ministry's General Directorate of State Security (DGSE), the DGSE's denial that he was ever arrested despite compelling evidence that he had been incarcerated at the DGSE's El Chipote jail, his official pardon by the Council of State, and the fruitless efforts to locate Ordonez and secure his release.

The second document is a CPDH letter to Council of State President Carlos Nunez, one of the nine members of the FSLN's National Directorate, noting that Ordonez was not released despite the pardon and calling for an investigation.

The third document is a memorandum by Mateo Guerrero, then Executive Director of the Sandinistas' official National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (CNPPDH), attesting that during his investigation of the case he had interviewed a prisoner who confirmed that Ordonez was at El Chipote.

The fourth document is an order from the Nicaraguan Supreme Court instructing Guerrero to complete his investigation of the Órdonez case.

The fifth document is a statement by Guerrero after he defected in 1985 explaining how the Sandinistas frustrated his investigation of the case and published in the name of the CNPPDH a false statement claiming that Ordonez had been set free.

Next, there are several press clippings which demonstrate how the Sandinistas use false information and censorship to prevent the Nicaraguan people from learning of such cases; the first is an article in the pro-Sandinista *El Nuevo Diario* printing the communique falsely stating that Ordonez had been released; the remaining four articles are from the independent daily *La Prensa*, all of which were censored by the Interior Ministry.

The final document is a statement by former Interior Ministry Lieutenant Alvaro Baldizon attesting that Ordonez had been executed on orders of Vice Minister Luis Carrion.

Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua

Is This Farm Worker Dead or Alive?

Ramon Ordonez Ramirez

RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ, 17, Nicaraguan citizen, is a farm worker from Las Mojarras, Department of Leon. On January 21, 1984, he fled his home following earlier attempts by [the Nicaraguan Government's General Directorate of] State Security to detain him. On June 21, 1984, his family was informed by relatives of ELIAS ALEMAN MEJIA, a prisoner, that the young ORDONEZ RAMIREZ was being held in the State Security jail known as "El Chipote" and that he was in very poor health, having lost 30 pounds.

After hearing this, Ordonez Ramirez's relatives went to the Public Relations Office of the General Directorate of State Security, but were refused any information as to the whereabouts of the young man.

On August 7, 1984, the Permanent Commission on Human Rights received a complaint from AMILCAR JOSE GUTIERREZ GAMEZ, a young man who had been imprisoned in the El Chipote jail from June 6 to July 27, 1984. While there, he learned through a prisoner by the name of ISAAC MEMBRENO that a young man by the name of RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ was being held under the worst of conditions in the basement of El Chipote and was in poor health. Membreno asked Gutierrez to do something for the young man when he got out, since his family did not know where he was.

At the beginning of August, a letter from Mr. Antonio Jarquin—currently a member of the Constituent Assembly—to a representative of the Council of State (Mauricio Diaz) stated that Jarquin had received confirmation from Dr. Mateo Guerrero of the National Commission for [the Promotion and Protection of] Human Rights of the imprisonment of ORDONEZ RAMIREZ at El Chipote and that he was asking the Council of State to grant a pardon to certain prisoners, including RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ.

On August 29, 1984, the Council of State granted the pardon and on September 8, 1984, the National Commission on Human Rights issued a communique in which it stated that, in response to aproaches made by that office, the Government Junta had granted pardons to 38 persons. RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ's name was on the list. According to the National Commission, he had been freed some days prior to the date of the pardon decree.

On August 14, 1984, the Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua filed for a writ of habeas corpus in favor of ORDONEZ RAMIREZ and on September 3, 1984, the Criminal Division of the Appeals Court in Managua ordered that the prisoner be produced and designated Dr. Mateo Guerrero as Executing Judge. Dr. Guerrero submitted his first report on September 18, 1984. He stated that he had officially queried Captain Raul Cordon Morice, Director of the National Penitentiary System, who responded that no one by the name of RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ appeared on the lists of those imprisoned at the various penal institutions. Dr. Mateo Guerrero pointed out that he had determined, from relatives of ORDONEZ, that the subject was at the State Security jail because ELIAS ALEMAN MEJIA and AMILCAR GUTIERREZ GAMEZ had reported that they had talked with the prisoner and that he was being held in cell No. 25 at El Chipote.

Dr. Guerrero also stated that Lt. Oscar Loza had agreed to meet with him on September 17, 1984, but that, when that day came, Lt. Loza sent word that he could not make the meeting and would have to reschedule it for some other time.

On October 1, 1984, Dr. Mateo Guerrero submitted his final report, advising the Appeals Court of a conversation he had at the jail known as "Zona Franca" with an inmate, ELIAS ALEMAN MEJIA, who had spent two months at El Chipote. The prisoner told Dr. Guerrero that while he was at that jail he had become acquainted with a young man who identified himself as RAMON ORDONEZ, that Ramon was in very poor health, and that his family did not know that he was imprisoned there because he had been arrested in Leon by members of State Security. They agreed that the first to be released would get word to the other's family.

On [October] 23, the Supreme Court of Justice issued a writ in which it asked the Appeals Court to request that the Executing Judge, Mateo Guerrero, leave no stone unturned in his dealings with the State Security. At the same time, the Supreme Court ordered the Office of the Attorney General to find out immediately where RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ was being held and to determine which authority was responsible for his disappearance. On November 15, 1984, Executing Judge Omar Cortez, a representative of the Attorney General, submitted his report to the Appeals Court in which he stated that he had met with Lt. Oscar Loza, Chief of Operations for State Security, and that Lt. Loza had said that he was not holding ORDONEZ RAMIREZ. On November 29, the Appeals Court sent an official communication to Mr. Cortez in which it stated that it did not consider his efforts complete and that the inquiries should be resumed at their starting point and the investigation should be pursued with authorities at the national level. To date, Mr. Cortez has ignored this court order.

We wish to note that in none of the reports submitted by the Executing Judges appointed to carry out the writ of habeas corpus were the authorities contacted for an inspection of the jails. Instead, the statements by officials of the Penitentiary System and State Security were simply accepted, even when there were grounds—includig testimony by other prisoners—for believing that RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ was being held in State Security jails.

More than a year has passed since the arrest and disapperance of RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ. State security had disobeyed the court order. The Council of State, the co-legislative branch in Nicaragua, issued a pardon decree that has never been implemented. It can therefore be deduced that the legislative and judicial branches in Nicaragua have no control over State Security.

The Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua asks the governments of the world and the international humanitarian organizations to demand that the Nicaraguan Government respond immediately as to the fate of young RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ.

Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua

Managua, Nicaragua
September 26, 1984

Commander of the Revolution
Carlos Nunez Tellez
President of the Council of State
Ref. 2596

Commander Nunez:

We are writing to you to present the case of young RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ, age 17, single, a student, resident of the district of LAS MOJARRAS, jurisdiction of El Jicaral, Department of Leon. His father AMADO ORDONEZ MORENO, has told us that this young man disappeared from his home on January 21 of this year, under circumstances which have not yet been explained.

The subject's father also told us that ever since the date of his son's disappearance, his house has been visited regularly by military personnel who have left notices ordering his son to rejoin Patriotic Military Service [forced conscription] since, on one occasion, he was sent as a member of the military to the mountains on the northern border of the country. After his disappearance, repeated efforts—both in the region where he lived and here in Region III—were made to locate him. Authorities in the Penitentiary System, the police, and the General Directorate of State Security (DGSE] were contacted, without any positive results.

After the relatives had been denied information by the DGSE Public Relations Office, they heard that young ORDONEZ RAMIREZ was being held in the jail known as El Chipote. This information was provided by relatives of ELIAS ALEMAN MEJIA, a prisoner who was introduced on June 20, 1984, at a press conference given by the Minister of Interior and identified as a member of the Internal Front of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN). Therefore it is presumed that the information given the relatives of young ORDONEZ RAMIREZ is true, particulary if one considers that the two families did not know each other until the date on which the information was provided.

On August 7, 1984, this Commission received a complaint from a young man, whose name we shall not reveal at this time, who had been held in the State Security jail known as El Chipote. He said that he had learned that RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ was being held at El Chipote in what had once been a weapons storeroom, and that he was in very poor health.

On July 10, 1984, we sent a letter to Lt. Oscar Loza, Chief of Operations for the DGSE, in which we described young ORDONEZ RAMIREZ's situation. We never received an answer to that letter, so Ordonez Ramirez's family filed a formal petition for writ of habeas corpus in his favor through Dr. Carlos Jose Madrigal Calderon, Legal Adviser to this office. The petition was filed on August 14, 1984, and Dr. Mateo Guerrero was named Executing Judge. When Dr. Guerrero officially contacted the DGSE Chief of Operations, he wsa told that [Ordonez Ramirez] was not being held. A similar response was received from the authorities of the National Penitentiary System.

Furthermore, the Council of State, on August 29, 1984, pardoned several prisoners, among them RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ. That circumstnce would seem to be tacit confirmation that the young man was indeed being held. However, when his parents went to State Security facilities to obtain the release of their pardoned son, they were told that he was not being held by that organization. The National Penitentiary System told them the same thing.

We must also point out that *El Nuevo Diaio* [a pro-Sandinista newspaper] of September 8, 1984, published a communique from the National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (CNPPDH) in which it was announced that, as a result of approaches made by that Commission to the Government Junta and Council of State, 35 prisoners were freed. Specific mention was made of the case of RAMON ORDONEZ, about whom it was said that "he had been released days prior to the publication of the pardon." This is both totally false and contradictory, because Dr. Mateo Guerrero, who is on the staff of that Commission, was appointed by the Appeals Court in Managua to serve as Executing Judge of the above-mentioned habeas corpus proceedings. Dr. Guerrero reported to that court on September 18 that he could not locate [Ordonez Ramirez].

According to the *Ley de Gracia* [Clemency Law], which was the means supposedly used to grant these pardons, including the one for RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ, the National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights is the first level in the hierarchy to which petitions for pardons, or for commutations or reductions in sentences, are submitted. The Commission, in turn, "will send the results of its investigation, along with its recommendation, to the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction. The Junta will examine the case and, if it finds it has merit, will send it to the Council of State for decision." All this means that there is a complete procedure involved that implies, logically, that the subject of the petition is being detained and that his file has been reviewed as an essential requisite for granting a pardon.

The Commission is concerned about the fact that, despite ample evidence of the detention of young RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ, and despite the fact that an official pardon was granted him by the Council of State, the authorities in the Ministry of Interior systematically deny that he has ever been held.

It is precisely because information received in our office long before the pardon indicated that RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ was being held in prison under very bad conditions and was in poor health that we are concerned. It was this which led us on Jule 27—one day after having received the first indication that he was being held in prison—to send a telegram to the Head of State Security in Managua asking that [Ordonez Ramirez] be given medical attention. A copy of that communication was sent to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Nicaragua.

Is is for these reasons that we are making a formal request for an immediate investigation for the purpose of finding out—in accordance with the analysis that was made in the application of the Clemency Law—under whose authority RAMON ORDONEZ RAMIREZ was being held, and to inform his family of his physical condition and legal status, or, at least, what happened to him.

We believe that for the sake of the reputation of the Council of State, the credibility of the authorities, and the fulfillment of the law, it is imperative that an exhaustive investigation be conducted and a public announcement of its results made.

We hope that this letter will be favorably received and will be acted on immediately.

Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua

[signed]

Lino Hernandez Trigueros
Director of the Legal Department

Copies to: Junta of Government of National Reconstruction
Office of Complaints, Ministry of Interior
International Committee of the Red Cross
National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
Political parties represented on the Council of State
Files

Memorandum

In the City of Managua, at 10:00 a.m. on September 28, 1984, the undersigned duly constituted Executing Judge went to the penal institution known as "Zona Franca" located near the Augusto Cesar Sandino airport to meet with Elias Margarito Aleman Mejia, an inmate, to discuss the status of Ramon Ordonez Ramirez in whose favor a Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus was granted by the Criminal Division on September 3 of this year.

The aforesaid Aleman Mejia, speaking aloud and in the presence of guards—Lt. Freddy Espinoza and Mario Santiago Leon Merlo, a soldier—made the following statements after having been told the purpose of my visit and in what capacity I was acting. He said that his name was Elias Margarito Aleman Mejia from Managua, and that he had been arrested in Colonia Centroamerica on approximately April 20 of this year and taken to the prison known as "El Chipote," which belongs to State Security. While in that prison he was in contact for approximately 20 consecutive days with someone who identified himself as RAMON ORDONEZ MORENO [*sic*], who said he was from LAS MOJARRAS, Department of Leon. This individual was 17 years old, his voice was very weak, and the witness never saw him but he did talk with him during the above mentioned period through a hole in the wall that separated them. He [Ordonez] said that he was in very poor health, hairless both above and below, that he wore yellow shoes that were falling apart, and had brown hair and white skin. He said that his family did not know that he was being held there, and the two agreed that the first to get out of prison would go and tell the other's family where he was. Elias also said that Ordonez coughed and spit often, and that one of the things he talked about was how he had been captured, that he had belonged to a battalion of militia for two months and was accused of being contrary, which was utterly false, that he was captured in Leon, that he was recruited in LAS MOJARRAS by a person whose last name was Lopez and who was called "el Pez." The only offense he could imagine having commmitted is that he no longer wanted to stay in the militia.

He also said that his mother was on the Atlantic Coast and was separated from his father, whose name was Amado Ordonez. He had an uncle called Martin Ordonez. None of these people are known to the witness. Through these chats the two became friends. They even sang a song entitled "El Soldadito" [The Little Soldier] and songs about mothers.

He also said that when he came from Leon to Managua in the company of this individual he called "el Pez," they stopped for lunch at Km. 29 or 39—he cannot recall exactly. Then two members of State Security got into the vehicle in which they had been traveling, and took him prisoner.

Elias said that when he left the State Security prison, Ramon Ordonez was still there. He never heard anything more about him, and he decided to report this situation not only because he had agreed with Ordonez to do so, but also because a life was in danger.

Elias was then transferred to "Zona Franca." While there, he was talking with someone from LAS MOJARRAS by the name of Cleto Rayo, and when he told him the story, Cleto said he was an uncle of Ordonez.

About a week ago people in civilian clothes came to ask about that same Ordonez. They said they were from the UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees]. He had always given the same statement. He wants people to know about his relationship with RAMON ORDONEZ MORENO [*sic*], whom he insists he never saw but did talk with.

At the end of the interview, Elias told me that he is concerned about what the guards said about his statements—that they are vague. He does not think they are vague; rather, they are serious and a life is involved. If he is interrogated, he will tell the same story.

Having read this account and found it correct, I approve, ratify and sign it.

[signed]

Mateo Jose Guerrero Flores
Executing Judge

Supreme Court of Justice
Court Notice

I, Lydia Esther Aguilar Rivas, chief clerk and process server of the Supreme Court of Justice, inform you, Amado Ordonez Moreno, through this notice, that a ruling has been issued in the complaint which you brought against Dr. Mateo Guerrero. That ruling reads as follows:

"Supreme Court of Justice, Managua, D.N., Nicaragua, October 23, 1984, 1:00 p.m. Having considered the complaint filed by Amado Ordonez Moreno because of the disappearance of his son, Ramon Ordonez Ramirez, the Criminal Division of the Appeals Court should once again contact the Executing Judge, Mateo Guerrero, and urge that he exhaust all efforts with State Security, as he promised to do according to the report of the Chief Judge of the Appeals Court, Luis Arguello Nicaragua. Then—immediately, since the physical well-being of an individual is at stake—an order should be issued, pursuant to Article 9 of the Law of *Amparo* [Protection] for Personal Freedom and Security, to the Office of the Attorney General, for the attention of Ernesto Castillo Martinez, to immediately ascertain where he [the subject] is being held and who is responsible for this situation. The Attorney General should proceed with the authority conferred upon the Executing Judge. In order that this ruling may be implemented, it is to be transcribed in official form and sent to the Appeals Court of Managua, Criminal Division, warning the court to act quickly under the circumstances. Roberto Arguello H., H. Zuniga M., S. Rivas H., R. Robelo M. Before me, Lydia Aguilar R., Clerk."

This is a true copy provided to you, through this notice, for all legal intents and purposes. Done at Managua, at 1:39 in the afternoon of October 23, 1984.

[signed]

Lydia Aguilar

Anyone who refuses to receive this notice, does not deliver it promptly, or refuses to sign the receipt shall be fined from 10 to 25 cordobas, but the notifications shall remain valid. (Art. 120 Pr.)

Statement by Mateo Jose Guerrero

The case of Ramon Ordonez Ramirez reflects the political will of the Sandinista government of Nicaragua concerning the promotion and protection of human rights. Ordonez Ramirez, 17, was made to "disappear" by the Interior Ministry. In an investigation which I was assigned to conduct, the detention of Ordonez Ramirez in the "El Chipote" jail was proved. Nevertheless, State Security [DGSE] asserted that he had never been detained. It should be noted that Ordonez Ramirez was pardoned by the Sandinista government, and this demonstrates the fact of his presence in the penitentiary system.

Another factor is that a high ranking official, Rafael Cordova Rivas, a member of the junta of the Government of National Reconstruction, presented me with a statement drafted in the Government House [*Casa de Gobierno*] which was to be distributed to the media. The statement concluded by saying that Ordonez Ramirez had not been a beneficiary of the pardon because he had been set free a few days earlier. The National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights decided not to publish this statement, but two days later it appeared in *El Nuevo Diario* [a pro-Sandinista newspaper].

The family of Ramirez questioned me about the statement, saying that it was false, which it was, and accusing me of being an accomplice in something with which I had nothing to do. All reports prepared by me were censored, which confirmed that the government was trying to cover up this abuse. After this, I was harassed by various organizations, such as the Sandinista Workers Central (CST), the Ministry of Labor and the Supreme Court, and accused of being a defender of *Somocistas*. Later, the Nicaraguan Democratic Force [FDN] radio station, *Radio 15 de Septiembre*, accused me of being an accomplice, giving details about the location of my house, my physical appearance, and the car I drove. Thus, I was pressured by both sides, and my personal security was in imminent danger. One week after I had left Nicaragua, a person was murdered next to the home in which I had been living. I do not discount the possibility that this could have been an attempt on my life.

This case makes very clear the reality of the human rights situation in which the Nicaraguan people live.

[*El Nuevo Diario*, September 8, 1984]

National Human Rights Commission Arranges For Pardons

We have received the following communique.

The National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights [CNPPDH] announces to the Nicaraguan public and to world opinion that the proposals made by this Commission to obtain pardons for a list of 38 prisoners have been accepted by the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction and the Council of State, with the following results.

This Commission has been able to determine that the following people have actually been freed: Donald Estrada Zamora, Hugo Castillo Zeledon, Luis Salvador Aranda, Ivan Noguera Payan, Alberto Chamorro, Mario

Castillo Mendoza, Eduardo Llanos Ramos, Denis Miranda Lira, Benito Gomez, Numan Calderon, Anacleto Ravo Torres, Mario Miguel Mendoza Mayorga, Raul Llanos Ramos, Edelberto Sevilla Duarte, Sidar Cordero, Salomon Diaz Hernandez, Santos Sanchez Cortedano, Jacinto Sanchez Cortedano, Ivan Soza Cerda, Armando Navarro Castro, Ivan Otero Castaneda, Armando Nunuda Ramirez, Humberto Fonseca Linares, Mercedes Dolores Espinoza, Arturo Vallejos Saenz, Manuel Lopez Rodriguez, Estanislao Cano Mayorga, Estanislao Cano Castillo.

The following persons on the above list who were serving their sentences under house arrest had already been freed: Ivan Otero Castaneda, Armando Nunuda Ramirez, Humberto Fonseca Linares, Mercedes Dolores Espinoza, Arturo Vallejos, Manuel Lopez Rodriguez.

Others, such as Ramon Ordonez, had obtained their release days prior to the publication of the Pardon Decree.

[Censored from *La Prensa,* September 24, 1984]

Pardoned Prisoner Not Found in Prison

A genuine "disappearance" case has been brought to the attention of the authorities at the headquarters of the DGSE [Nicaraguan Government's General Directorate of State Security], the Council of State, the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction [JGRN], the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights [CNPPDH], the Supreme Court of Justice, and the Advisory Commission of the Council of State which approved the recent pardon decree.

The case is that of 16-year-old Ramon [Ordonez] Ramirez, a union member who was arrested by State Security and was pardoned on August 29, 1984.

Demand that the Junta Investigate

The young man's father, Amado Ordonez Moreno, has written a letter explaining his demand to Sergio Ramirez, Rafael Cordova Rivas, and Daniel Ortega, all of whom are members of the JGRN, and asking them to investigate the case fully. He has also written to Dr. Roberto Arguello Hurtado, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

In that letter, Mr. Amado Ordonez Moreno states that his son had been arrested by the DGSE and that he had been officially told that his son was being held at El Chipote (Loma Hill) since February of this year.

In prison, Ramon Ordonez Ramirez was being subjected to subhuman treatment and conditions. This is what his relatives were told by Elias Aleman Mejia, another prisoner who passed the information through one of his sisters.

After various attempts to learn what happened, the father of the missing prisoner contacted the CTN [Nicaraguan Workers Central], which is separated from the true CTN, to inform Antonio Jarquin of the case.

Appeal to the CNPPDH

The latter appealed to the organization known as the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights for confirmation of the detention of young Ramon Ordonez Ramirez.

Dr. Mateo Guerrero of that institution confirmed, prior to August 7, 1984, that the youth was being held. On that basis, a petition was filed on August 7 to have Ramon Ordonez Ramirez pardoned along with 16 others.

The Government Junta approved the pardons for 7 of the 16, so that when the Council of State approved the prisoners' requests on August 28, Ramon Ordonez was one of those pardoned.

State Security Asked for Information

When the pardon was granted, State Security was asked for information. Second Lieutenant Huete at House 50 [a DGSE facility at El Chipote] denied categorically that the prisoner was there.

Later, inquiries were made of Council member Manuel Eugarrios, a member of the parliamentary commission that gave its opinion on the pardon, since it was thought impossible that someone whose whereabouts were unknown would be pardoned.

Indeed, it was learned that Eugarrios knew that Mateo Guerrero had the file on the prisoner; however, [Guerrero] later denied that he had it, despite the fact that, as an official of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, he had published the name of Ramon Ordonez Ramirez on the list of pardoned prisoners that appeared in *El Nuevo Diario* on September 8, along with a statement that he had been released.

After all this fruitless effort, the interested parties appealed to Commander Rafael Solis, a member of the Council of State. He was told by the DGSE that Ramon Ordonez had never been imprisoned.

Ex-Inmate Reaffirms Detention

Meanwhile, the presentations made to the JGRN and to the Supreme Court of Justice included the testimony of a former inmate named Amilcar Gutierrez Gamez, who stated in writing that he had talked with Issac Membreno, still a prisoner, who, in turn, had stated that he had shared a cell with Ramon Ordonez in what had been a weapons warehouse at Tiscapa Hill during the Somoza era.

Military Deny It

All the foregoing is, obviously, considered clear evidence of the existence of the prisoner and so an interview with Lt. Oscar Lopez was requested last September 18. He, too, denied that the prisoner was being held.

All these problems have arisen because of the denials of the existence of Ramon Ordonez Ramirez. His whereabouts are still unkown, as is his fate.

The CPDH Intervenes

Finally, the Permanent Commission on Human Rights [CPDH], acting on behalf of the family, commissioned Dr. Madrigal to have the Supreme Court appoint an Executing Judge for the case. Dr. Mateo Guerrero was named, but it is the opinion of the CPDH attorneys that he has not fulfilled his responsibilities. Therefore, the letter to the Government Junta ends with a request that appropriate attention be given this case, since the life and safety of a pardoned citizen are at stake.

[Censored from *La Prensa,* October 5, 1984]

Whereabouts of Ramon Ordonez Still a Mystery

The whereabouts of Ramon Ordonez Ramirez, the 16-year-old farm worker from Las Mojarras, are still unknown. He was arrested in January by State Security and pardoned in August by a special commission of the Council of State.

Amado Ordonez and Marlene Ramirez, parents of the unfortunate young man, have presented the case to different civil and military authorities, without success.

In view of the parents' desperation, Dr. Lino Hernandez, director of the Legal Department of the Permanent Commission on Human Rights [CPDH], sent a letter to the President of the Council of State, Carlos Nunez, demanding an investigation into the case.

Likewise, the letter contains a demand that the parents of the missing youth be informed of his present physical and legal circumstances, or at least told what happened to him.

On August 29 of this year, the Council of State pardoned several prisoners, among them the farm worker Ramon Ordonez. When his parents came to get him, they were told that he was not in prison.

Nevertheless—recalls the CPDH spokesperson—a communique from the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights was published on September 8 in which it was announced that, through the Commission's efforts, the Government Junta and the Council of State had released him. This is false, states the CPDH official.

[Censored from *La Prensa,* October 12, 1984]

Reports On The Pardoned Prisoner Who Is Missing

Elias Aleman, who was prisoner at the El Chipote jail prior to the pardon of August 29, stated today, to Dr. Mateo Guerrero, coordinator of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights [CNPPDH], that he was a fellow prisoner of Ramon Ordonez Ramirez, the inmate who, despite being pardoned, has not been found at any jail.

Aleman, who told Dr. Mateo Guerrero that he had seen and talked with Ramon Ordonez during his captivity, emphasized that the two promised each other that the first to obtain release would visit the other's family so that the relatives could make every effort to free the one left behind.

Aleman stated that when he was freed, the first thing he did was visit Ramon's parents in Las Mojarras and tell them of their son's condition.

Elias Aleman's testimony before the CNPPDH shows that the 16-year-old farm worker from Las Mojarras was being held at El Chipote, but the authorities of that military base deny this.

[Censored from *La Prensa,* December 1, 1984]

Court Orders Search for Ordonez

By order of the Supreme Court, Dr. Mateo Guerrero, an official of the National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights [CNPPDH], has been named to investigate the disappearance of Ramon Ordonez Ramirez, a farm worker.

Ordonez Ramirez, 16, a native of Las Mojarras, Department of Leon, was arrested by State Security on January 2, 1984, and pardoned on August 29 by the Council of State, but he has never shown up.

The court document states that Dr. Guerrero, who was appointed Executing Judge by the Appeals Court in a habeas corpus proceeding, must complete his efforts [to obtain satisfaction from] State Security—as he had promised to do—according to the report by Chief Justice of the Appeals Court, Dr. Luis Arguello Nicaragua.

This should be done immediately, because the well-being of an individual is at stake within the meaning of Article 9 of the Law of *Amparo* for Personal Freedom and Security, states the document.

The court also pointed out that an order needs to be sent to the Office of the Attorney General, for the attention of Dr. Ernesto Castillo Martinez, to immediately ascertain the whereabouts of Ramon Ordonez and who is responsible for his disappearance.

Lastly, the document states that the Attorney General should proceed with the authority conferred upon the Executing Judge to complete the investigation, and that the circumstances merit quick action.

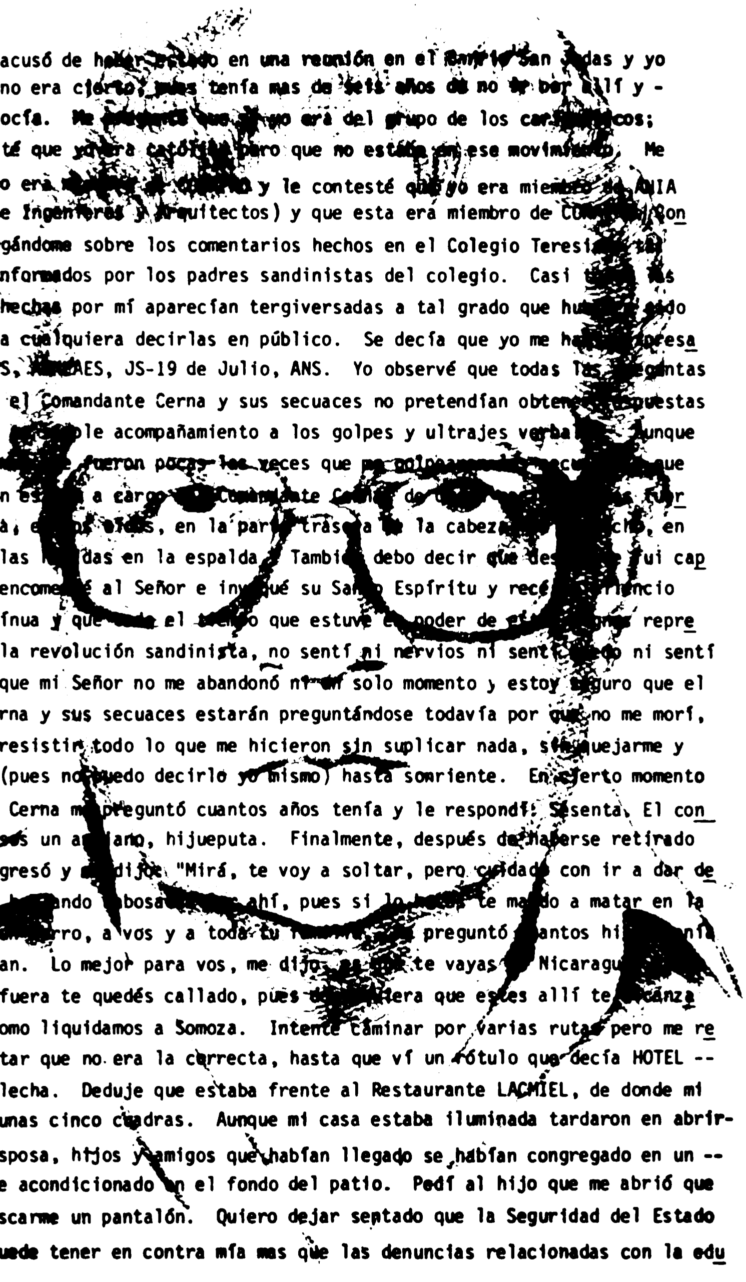
Statement by Alvaro Jose Baldizon Aviles

I, Alvaro Jose Baldizon Aviles, was a lieutenant in the Interior Ministry serving from December 1982 to July 1985 as head of the Special Investigations Commission of the Directorate of Internal Affairs. In May 1985, a request was received in the Directorate of Internal Affairs from the National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights concerning citizen Ramon Ordonez who had been captured by [the General Directorate of] State Security [DGSE] and taken to the jail at El Chipote run by DGSE Department F-1 (Operations).

I consulted with Captain Oscar Loza Averruz, DGSE Chief of Operations, who told me that he did not have to give me any explanation of the case and suggested that it would be better if I conferred directly with the office of Commander Luis Carrion Cruz, since it was Carrion who had approved the application of special measures [execution] for Ramon Ordonez. Under these circumstances, I contacted Captain Charlotte Baltodano, who personally took charge of consulting with the office of First Vice Minister Luis Carrion Cruz. Later, Baltodano ordered me to file the Ordonez case as concluded by the application of special measures. Baltodano commented that there would be political problems in this case because there were witnesses who could testify that Ordonez had been a prisoner at El Chipote. She said that it would be necessary to raise this case with the Technical Commission headed by Sub-Commander Alvaro Guzman so that a false cover story could be prepared.

CPDH COMISION PERMANENTE DE DERECHOS HUMANOS DE NICARAGUA
DE NICARAGUA

TESTIMONIO DE SOFONIAS CISNEROS LEIVA



Enseguida me acusó de haber estado en una reunión en el Barrio San Judas y yo contesté que no era cierto, pues tenía mas de seis años de no ir por allí y que ya no conocía. Me preguntó que si yo era del grupo de los carismáticos; yo le constesté que yo era católico pero que no estaba en ese movimiento. Me preguntó si yo era [illegible] y le contesté que yo era miembro de ANIA (Asociacion de Ingenieros y Arquitectos) y que esta era miembro de [illegible]. Continuó interrogándome sobre los comentarios hechos en el Colegio Teresiano tal como fueron informados por los padres sandinistas del colegio. Casi todas las afirmaciones hechas por mí aparecían tergiversadas a tal grado que hubiera sido imposible para cualquiera decirlas en público. Se decía que yo me había expresado mal del EPS, [illegible]AES, JS-19 de Julio, ANS. Yo observé que todas las preguntas que me hacían el Comandante Cerna y sus secuaces no pretendían obtener respuestas sino que eran un simple acompañamiento a los golpes y ultrajes verbales. Aunque si puedo afirmar que fueron pocas las veces que me golpearon [illegible] que toda la sesión estuvo a cargo del Comandante Cerna, de [illegible] fuertes en la cara, en los ojos, en la parte trasera de la cabeza, en el pecho, en el abdómen y las patadas en la espalda. También debo decir que desde que fui capturado yo me encomendé al Señor e invoqué su Santo Espíritu y recé en silencio en forma contínua y que todo el tiempo que estuve en poder de [illegible] representantes de la revolución sandinista, no sentí ni nervios ni sentí miedo ni sentí dolor... Sé que mi Señor no me abandonó ni un solo momento y estoy seguro que el Comandante Cerna y sus secuaces estarán preguntándose todavía por qué no me morí, por que pude resistir todo lo que me hicieron sin suplicar nada, sin quejarme y probablemente(pues no puedo decirlo yo mismo) hasta sonriente. En cierto momento el Comandante Cerna me preguntó cuantos años tenía y le respondí: Sesenta. El contestó: Si ya sos un anciano, hijueputa. Finalmente, después de haberse retirado un momento regresó y me dijo: "Mirá, te voy a soltar, pero cuidado con ir a dar declaraciones o hablando babosadas por ahí, pues si lo hacés te mando a matar en la calle como un perro, a vos y a toda tu familia. Me preguntó cuantos hijos tenía y donde estaban. Lo mejor para vos, me dijo, es que te vayas de Nicaragua y aun estando afuera te quedés callado, pues donde quiera que estés allí te alcanzamos; ya ves como liquidamos a Somoza. Intenté caminar por varias rutas pero me regresaba al notar que no era la correcta, hasta que ví un rótulo que decía HOTEL COLON y una flecha. Deduje que estaba frente al Restaurante LACMIEL, de donde mi casa queda a unas cinco cuadras. Aunque mi casa estaba iluminada tardaron en abrirme, pues mi esposa, hijos y amigos que habían llegado se habían congregado en un cuarto de aire acondicionado en el fondo del patio. Pedí al hijo que me abrió que corriera a buscarme un pantalón. Quiero dejar sentado que la Seguridad del Estado no tenía ni puede tener en contra mía mas que las denuncias relacionadas con la edu

Annex 2

The Sofonias Cisneros Leiva Case

The case of Sofonias CISNEROS Leiva shows how the Sandinistas deal with those who question their efforts to implant Marxism in Nicaragua.

The first document is a letter by the Nicaraguan Union of Christian School Parents Associations (UNAPAFACC), of which Cisneros is President, to Minister of Education Fernando Cardenal, objecting to the Marxist-Leninist orientation of the Sandinistas' educational program.

The second and third documents are letters from UNAPAFACC and the Confederation of Professional Associations of Nicaragua (CONAPRO) to President Daniel Ortega protesting the subsequent arrest of Cisneros.

The final document is a statement by Cisneros to the Permanent Commission on Human Rights (CPDH) describing how he was arrested and taken to the General Directorate of State Security (DGSE) jail at El Chipote, beaten and threatened with death by DGSE chief Lenin Cerna, and eventually dumped nude on the streets of Managua late at night.

Nicaraguan Union of Christian School Parents Associations (UNAPAFACC)

Managua, April 9, 1985

Rev. Fernando Cardenal
Minister of Education
His Office

Mr. Minister:

The parents of students in Christian schools were greatly surprised to receive news of the circular from your Ministry which forces all children in primary school, in coordination with the Sandinista Children's Association (ANS), to receive two hours a week of the so-called *Patriotic Education of Children Plan* which includes political and military talks, trips to camps, outings, and games aimed at creating a partisan mentality in the children and promoting class hatred, violence, faith in weapons, and a warlike spirit. Furthermore, it is an *informal* program for which there is no content or scope that the school administrations, the teachers, to say nothing of the parents, would know about in advance (since the program will apparently be sent by the MED [Ministry of Education] on a monthly basis). Therefore the program could consist of whatever comes to the minds of those who have been designated by the Ministry, and we as parents will be blindly sending our children to school for their minds and hearts to be deformed according to the plans and interests of the party in power. In spite of the fact that the study programs put into effect in accordance with the so-called "Aims and Objectives of the New Education," and imposed against the will of parents who rejected them at the time, are already sufficiently alienating for adolescents, the indoctrination campaign is now aimed at younger children, since the study programs have not drawn a response from the vast majority of discerning young people.

We, as parents, are extremely concerned by a number of developments which are steadily becoming more conspicuous within the educational process, including:

- All subjects (in pre-school, primary, secondary, and higher education) are receiving a rapidly increasing political content.
- The weekly schedule is loaded down with more and more Marxist-Leninist teachings, while religious education (in private denominational schools) does not get officially permitted time, that is to say that it is more and more difficult for these schools to provide religious education, in spite of the fact that they are officially authorized to operate.
- The education provided in private schools is supervised closely and severely, and the threat of dismissal or expulsion hangs over these schools principals (many of whom are foreigners).
- The school principals, the faculty, and the independent students are constantly pressured by the so-called Sandinista Youth "-July 19" which, in spite of being a tiny minority (even in the public schools), receives the backing of the Ministry, the Sandinista Police, ANDEN [National Association of Nicaraguan Educators], the CDS [Sandinista Defense Committees], and all the country's authorities in imposing its political instructions by force.
- The pressure exerted on the teachers to join the National Association of Nicaraguan Educators (ANDEN), which is a mass organization attached to the FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front], through which the state channels special assistance for "consistent" teachers, keeps the majority in a state of anxiety.

[There is] interference in the educational process by people from outside the schools, such as for the subject called Vocational Training, which is not under the control of the school principals and teachers, who cannot even be present. "Experts" are sent by the MED to teach this subject, and attendance is strictly monitored by a member of the Sandinista Youth. How is such secrecy and such a peculiar arrangement explained?

We as parents understand that young people need to gain not only the knowledge which will help them develop themselves as professionals and specialists, but also education that will train them in good citizenship; but this is very different from what is being attempted in Nicaragua, which is to take advantage of the educational process to inculcate in the young a foreign materialistic ideology which denies them their value as people. It cannot even be claimed that it is creating truly free citizens with independent, pluralistic ideologies, unaligned with any foreign power, because we all know that this is not the case.

We want our children to know their country, to love it, to feel proud of being Nicaraguan and not to have to suffer abroad for the simple fact [of being Nicaraguan]. We want the children to develop into upright, sincere, and fraternal citizens, pure of mind and heart, who will love and serve their fellow men; who will build peace and unity through love and sacrifice, and love freedom as people, as children of an infinitely good and generous God who made them free to be masters of their own actions. We do not want our children to simply be a number in a formless mob, obeying instructions that are not even in the interests of their own country. We do not wish to live in a country all of whose citizens will think what the party in power orders them to think and where it will be a crime to "dissent" from the way in which the country's affairs are handled. We cannot even imagine that we Nicaraguans could accept a police state, in which family members distrust one another. We do not aspire to that kind of "liberation."

And everything depends on education. You, as a priest, know better than most from what we have to liberate ourselves. You know that we are not going to find the causes beyond our borders, nor beyond the walls of our homes, nor even beyond ourselves. You, as a priest, know where the root of sin is and why it bears fruit. You, as a priest, know what the Lord expects from us as parents, children, brothers, friends. You know how and why we were created. You know that we as parents have the sacred obligation to finish the work that our Creator began. You know that this is not only an obligation that any parent is ready to meet happily and lovingly, but a **right** that has not been granted us by any statute or statement or agreement or law, but one that we were born with as part of ourselves and that, of course, we cannot yield, or delegate, or transfer to any other person, not even the state.

We, as Christians, most of us Catholic, believe that if the government which rules the destinies of this country has chosen you, a priest, as Minister of Education, and has shown great determination for you to remain in that post, it is because it believes that you, as a Catholic priest, are in a better position to run the educational system of this country according to the educational doctrine advocated by Our Holy Mother Church and acknowledged as truly liberating.

This is why we trust that you will know how to reorient the course education is taking in our country, according to what is expected of you as a disciple of Jesus Christ and not what is recommended by all those foreign advisers sitting in the offices of your Ministry. As a first step in that reorientation, we would appreciate your immediate suspension of the above-mentioned PATRIOTIC EDUCATION OF CHILDREN PLAN which has prompted this statement.

You can count on our prayers for the Lord to help you carry out the sacred task for which he directly and indirectly has made you responsible.

Forgive us for having had to address you in public. Given the urgency of the matter, we could not wait to be granted an audience at a later time. However, we are willing to meet with you as soon as possible to deal more extensively with this and other matters of mutual interest.

We send you our Easter Christian wishes in the old sense of Easter, liberation from slavery (Old Testament), and in the new sense it acquired with Our Lord's resurrection, liberation from sin.

Christ Yesterday Christ Today Christ Always
God bless you.

Board of Directors of UNAPAFACC

[Signatures]	[Signatures]
Sofonias Cisneros L. President	Francisco Echegoyen M. Vice President
Francisco Ortega G. Secretary	Luis Saenz D. Treasurer
Jaime Icabalceta M. Member	Armando Lopez Member
Orbelina Guerrero G. Member	Juan Gutierrez Member
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Socorro Perez C. Member	Aminta de Malespin Member
Luis A. Mejia Member	Cesar Corea Ortiz Member

CC: Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua
Monsignor Leovigildo Lopez Fitoria
Monsignor Miguel Obando Bravo
Papal Nuncio
FENEC
Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (Rome)
International Office of Catholic Education (Brussels)
CELAM [Latin American Bishops' Council]
Inter-American Confederation of Catholic Education, Bogota, Colombia
FAPREC (Venezuela)
National Federation of Catholic School Parents' Associations (FENAPCO), Panama
UPAFEC (Managua)
CPDH [Permanent Commission on Human Rights]
Associate Members

Nicaraguan Union of Christian School Parents Associations (UNAPAFACC)

May 22, 1985

Commander
Daniel Ortega Saavedra
President of the Republic
Government House

Mr. President:

THE NICARAGUAN UNION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOL PARENTS ASSOCIATIONS (UNAPAFACC) wishes to inform you that on May 14 of this year, the General Directorate of State Security apprehended Sofonias Cisneros Leiva, President of UNAPAFACC, in his home, and held him in prison for over six hours (from 8:30 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.) and that although the injured party has not wanted to say anything about what happened, it is obvious from his behavior that he was threatened.

This outrage occurred as a result of the publication of UNAPAFACC letters, one of which was addressed to the Ministry of Education and another to you, and the explanations Mr. Cisneros gave to the parents of students of the *Colegio Teresiano* regarding details of the existing educational system. A summary of those explanations was published in *La Prensa* on May 12, 1985.

This event is inconsistent with the aims of freedom and peace continually announced by your government, since it is elementary that we as parents should express our opinion regarding something which hits so close to home as does the education of our children. In this way we try to exercise our natural right, which at the same time is a fundamental duty, to educate our children in accordance with our moral and Christian principles, as the best guarantee of a future society where real love and respect of our fellow men is fostered, where peace and justice reign, and there is never hate and conflict among brothers.

However, the exercise of what should be (in Nicaragua, as in the rest of the world) the inalienable right of freedom of speech and dissent has been the reason, as we mentioned above, for the arbitrary arrest of Mr. Sofonias Cisneros Leiva, a deplorable coercive act which by its unjustified nature violates the postulates of the Revolution contained in its Original Program of Government, the Statute of Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans, and Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of which Nicaragua is a signatory.

UNAPAFACC, which Mr. Cisneros represents, has not acted surreptitiously in its promotion and defense of a Humanizing Education; on the contrary, it has chosen to voice its objections, reservations, and opinions in public. At the same time, it has informed the parents in our country of what is understood by a Humanizing Education, since we are convinced that peace, brotherhood, and unity among Nicaraguans can only be achieved through love. To advocate and resort to violence only leads to the danger of chaos and destruction. This is why it greatly concerns Christian parents that Mr. Cisneros Leiva should be harassed and threatened for such a peaceful and democratic act.

We trust that you, as supreme authority of the Republic, will be able to take appropriate steps and give the civic guarantees to which we all have a right.

May God enlighten you in the search for the peace that our country so needs.

Respectfully,
Board of Directors of UNAPAFACC
[Organization stamp]

[Signatures]	[Signatures]
Francisco Echegoyen M. Vice President	Francisco Ortega G. Secretary

Members

Juan Gutierrez
David Pereira Diaz
Ricardo Saenz
Irma Lacayo
Luis Chamorro
Rolando Lacayo
Justo Pacheco
[Illegible]

Sergio Gazol Salcedo
Gabriel Pasos Lacayo
Armando Lopez
Jaime Icabalceta
[Illegible]
Mauricio Chamorro
Cesar Corea
[Illegible]

CC: His Eminence Cardinal Miguel Obando Bravo
Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua
c/o Monsignor Leovigildo Lopez Fitoria
Apostolic Nuncio, Managua
Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (Rome)
International Office of Catholic Education (Belgium)
Inter-American Confederation of Catholic Education
Latin American Bishops' Council (CELAM), Bogota, Colombia
FAPREC, Caracas, Venezuela
FENAPCO, [National Federation of Catholic School Parents' Associations], Panama
FENEC, Managua
UPAFEC, Managua
CPDH [Permanent Commission of Human Rights] Members

Confederation of Professional Associations of Nicaragua
CONAPRO

Managua, June 12, 1985

Commander
Daniel Ortega Saavedra
President of the Republic
Government House
City

Mr. President:

For no other crime than that of being an exemplary citizen, an outstanding professional, and a self-sacrificing family man, at 8:30 on the night of May 14 of this year, Mr. Sofonias Cisneros Leiva was apprehended at his home with a great show of force by the General Directorate of State Security, as if he were a dangerous criminal, having simply expressed opinions, in his capacity as President of the Nicaraguan Union of Christian School Parents Associations, regarding the educational programs and methodological standards that the State has imposed on the children and youth of Nicaragua and that are foreign to our religious and cultural traditions.

The Confederation of Professional Associations of Nicaragua (CONAPRO) most energetically protests this unjust and arbitrary arrest of Mr. Cisneros Leiva and, even more, the abuses and humiliations to which he was subjected, and respectfully but firmly demands that the government carry out an investigation regarding this matter, bearing in mind that a regime that considers itself to be existing under the rule of law should view the protection of the human rights of its citizens as its primary duty.

Awaiting your prompt and satisfactory response, we remain,

Respectfully,

Confederation of Professional Associations of Nicaragua
(Conapro)

[Signature]
Dr. Andres Zuniga M.
President

[Signature]
Dr. Ismael Gaitan F.
Secretary General

[Organization stamp]

CC: *La Prensa* newspaper
Barricada newspaper
Nuevo Diario newspaper
Embassies
Nicaraguan Union of Christian School Parents Associations
CONAPRO associations
His Eminence Cardinal Miguel Obando Bravo
CPDH [Permanent Commission on Human Rights]
File

Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua
Transcript

May 29, 1985

Permanent Commission on Human Rights
Managua, Nicaragua

Gentlemen:

I, Sofonias Cisneros Leiva, of legal age, married, a civil engineer, and resident of this city, appear before you to set forth the following:

On May 14, 1985, I was in my home (Repto. Pancasan 2a. Etapa No. 55), at about 8:30 p.m., when a group of soldiers arrived with an arrest and search warrant for me. I was taken out of my own bedroom where I had been resting. My wife, Isabel Argenal de Cisneros, and one of my daughters, Lily Ana Cisneros de Perez, were present.

A group of soldiers took me to one of the vehicles they had brought and another obtained the keys to a vehicle that was outside and that belongs to my wife, and they took it as well. My own automobile was in the garage and was not disturbed, although on the way they asked me if that other vehicle was mine and I answered that it was.

I was taken to a place known as El Chipote although I do not exactly know where, since when the vehicle in which I was traveling was passing the Military Hospital they forced me to bend over until I was almost on the floor of the vehicle; however, I was able to sense that we were climbing a steep hill. When we stopped, I was ordered to get out and walk with my head down and to put my head against the closest wall every time we stopped. We went into a building with many narrow corridors, passages, and stairs which, as I was able to see out of the corner of my eye, is near what was known in the past as "the Bunker."

First, I was locked up in a little cell which was one meter square and contained a small bench. Ten minutes later I was taken before a military clerk who ordered me to undress completely, including eyeglasses and shoes, and to put on a one-piece garment, of a very coarse and not very clean fabric, open in the upper front section, of the type known as an overall or "catch-n-black."

This same officer had me sit down and proceeded to make a record on me, typing out three pages with my personal data and vehicle number. He made me put my fingerprints on three of the pages and made an inventory of my belongings, including clothes, glasses, money, shoes, socks, and keys (I had left my wallet and watch at home). Then he had me sign all those papers and the large envelope containing my belongings. I asked the officer to allow me to keep a plastic aerosol container of nasal decongestant, since I have allergies and frequently cannot breathe through my nose. He did not answer me but I saw him set the aerosol container aside.

After this record was completed, I was taken back to the "little cell," which is in an adjoining room along the walls of which there are a large number of such cells. I had the impression that all the other cells were occupied. In these little cells the only ventilation is a crack above the door and another between the door and the floor. However, since the room is air-conditioned, the situation is not so unbearable.

Approximately one hour had gone by when I heard quick steps coming to my door. It was opened, and I was ordered to come out and walk along a hallway (keeping my head down). Finally, we reached a wider corridor, about three meters wide, very long and with many steps, along which, on both sides, are numbered concrete cubicles which I was not able to count because of the great length of the corridor. Before locking me up in one of them, the soldier who had led me there warned me that I was going to be alone, that I should not talk, or cry, or scream, or make any noise, that each time an officer opened my door I was to stand up.

He locked me into that cell and I was able to see that it was approximately 2.5 by 4 meters and contained four cots arranged in pairs on each side, one on top of the other, that there was an open space with an area for showers, and a concrete receptacle which was the toilet. The cubicle was entirely of concrete, without any opening for ventilation either in the ceiling or the walls, except in the front, where there was a 5-centimeter crack above the door. In the door itself there was a little window which is kept closed and is constantly being opened during the night by the officer on duty to ask the prisoner his name. The heat in that cell is infernal, since there is not a breath of air circulating. During the time I was locked up, I perspired profusely and was not able to get to sleep. In the silence of the night you could hear moans, loud breathing, snores, flatulence, and even whispered conversations in the other cells.

Over two hours had gone by when I heard someone come along the corridor and stop in front of my cell. He opened the door, ordered me to come out quickly, took me to a room where my clothes had been hung up, and ordered me to dress quickly. Then I was taken out of there and led once again to the front part of the building where a vehicle was waiting. They made me sit with my head down and I felt the vehicle go a short distance (more or less 50 meters). Then they made me jump out and go into a room at the edge of the outside yard which contained a bed, a chair, and a shower. It was larger and had good ventilation. They ordered me to sit down and wait. The people who had taken me there stood outside talking and awhile later I heard them saying: "He's coming! He's coming!" as a vehicle approached. They then opened the door, quickly took me out and made me get back into the vehicle which returned to the same place as before, more or less. They ordered me to walk along a corridor (still with my head down and almost being shoved along), and took me again to another of those little cells. When the door was opened, it bumped against a man inside who was curled up on the floor as if asleep or passed out; he looked like a peasant. They quickly closed the door to that little cell and took me to another one.

Some ten minutes had passed when I again heard someone come running to open my door, and I was ordered in vulgar terms to come out and follow along a hallway. We reached a place where there was a piece of furniture similar to a little counter or bar and next to it was a big, strong soldier surrounded by three or four assistants, one of whom was holding a roll of papers. The soldier in charge, who was apparently the one for whom they had been so anxiously waiting, ordered me to undress completely and move to the edge of the piece of furniture. He asked for my name and address and then punched me on the left nipple and kicked me several times. Then he asked me: "Do you know who I am?" I answered no, because in truth, without eyeglasses and in the half light, it was impossible for me to recognize him. He then told me: "Well I am *Comandante* Lenin Cerna and you are a son of a bitch who is going to die right here!" as he held his gun to my right temple. "First, I want you to realize why you are going to die right here!" he added, as he signaled to the soldier holding the papers. The latter told me that he was holding 20 security reports sent by parents of children attending the *Colegio Teresiano* on a "talk" I had given and in which (according to them) I had attacked the revolution, the *comandantes*, and the heroes and martyrs of the revolution. At that point, *Comandante* Cerna began to punch and kick me all over while he said: "Why do you attack the revolution? Why don't you respect the *comandantes* and why do you mock the heroes and martyrs?"

I answered that at the Family Parents' Assembly I had talked about the "New Education" and the way it was currently being imparted and about how the system was dehumanizing because it fostered hate among brothers, a warlike spirit, and family dissolution, in addition to attacking the church. I told him that *Comandante* Borge had stated that the revolution is love and that I did not see why they were upset when we as Christian parents advocated an education based on love. *Comandante* Cerna (whom I had by then been able to recognize) immediately ordered that my arms be handcuffed behind my back. I could feel that the handcuffs had an edge facing the body similar to a smooth spur, and, since they made me kneel in front of him and pushed me back, that sharp edge injured my back in several places. While I was leaning against the handcuffs, *Comandante* Cerna kicked me several times and then put his right boot on my ribs and stood on me with the intention of breaking them. He asked me whether I was Sidar Cisneros's brother and I answered that I was and he told me: "Well, you bastard, you should know that in this country no brother of Sidar Cisneros has the right to speak about shit. You are Guardsmen! The best thing you could have done was leave Nicaragua."

Then he accused me of having been at a meeting in the neighborhood of San Judas and I replied that this was not true, since it had been over six years since I had been in that area and no longer knew my way around. He asked me if I was a member of the charismatics group and I answered that I was Catholic but that I was not in that movement. He asked me whether I was a member of CONAPRO [Confederation of Professional Associations of Nicaragua], and I replied that I was a member of ANIA (Association of Engineers and Architects), which was a member of CONAPRO. He continued to interrogate me about the comments made at the *Colegio Teresiano* as they had been reported by the Sandinista parents of the school. Almost all the statements I had made were twisted to such an extent that it would have been impossible for anyone to make them in public. It was said that I had criticized the EPS [Sandinista People's Army], the CDS, AMNLAES [Association of Nicaraguan Women—Luisa Amanda Espinoza], Sandinista Youth–July 19, ANS [Sandinista Children's Association], etc., simply because I read examples taken from official textbooks in which the mathematical theory of sets was taught by adding mass organizations. He told me that I had made fun of the heroes and martyrs because I read from the official texts the so-called *Recta Numerica*, in which the calendar is reformed, making the year 1979 Year Zero of our history and putting the dates on which some heroes died according to the new calendar. He told me I had made fun of Luis Alfonso Velasquez by saying that he had been a simple bomb-thrower, which is not true; I simply said that the church had its own martyrs and gave the example of Domingo Savio. He asked me why I was against sex education in the schools: "What do you want. . . that your daughters become whores?" he added. I explained that we as parents were not opposed to sex education as such but to the time and way those courses were taught, judging from the official textbooks and the "notes" taken in class. "Why didn't you protest in the Somoza period about the fag priests who taught in and ran the religious schools?" he asked as he continued to kick me. Then he made me get up and, grabbing me by the hair, hit my head against the wall several times; his assistants did the same every time he went into the next room to talk to the one who had the "reports" and as they did so they would say, "Did you understand what the *comandante* said to you?"

I noticed that *Comandante* Cerna and his henchmen were not trying to get answers to all the questions they were asking me but rather the questions were simply an accompaniment to the blows and verbal abuse. Although I can say that the henchmen hit me only rarely and that the entire session was under *Comandante* Cerna's control. He is the one who hit me hard on the face, the ears, the back of the head, the chest, the abdomen, and the wounds on my back. I must also say that from the time I was apprehended, I commended my soul to God and called upon the Holy Ghost, and prayed in silence constantly, and that the entire time that I was in the hands of these worthy representatives of the Sandinista revolution, I was not nervous, or afraid, or in pain, except when *Comandante* Cerna punched me on my left side and knocked the wind out of me. I know that my Lord did not abandon me for one minute and I am sure that *Comandante* Cerna and his henchmen must still be wondering why I didn't die and how I was able to bear everything they did to me without pleading or complaining, and probably (since I cannot say so myself) with a smile on my face.

At one point, *Comandante* Cerna asked me how old I was and I said I was sixty. He answered: "You're already an old man, you son-of-a-bitch!"

Finally, after having left the room for a moment, he came back and told me: "Look, I'm going to let you go, but mind you don't go around making statements or saying dumb things, because if you do I'll have you killed in the street like a dog, you and your entire family!" He asked me how many children I had and where they were. He said: "The best thing for you is to leave Nicaragua, and even when you are gone, keep your mouth shut, because wherever you are we can get you; you saw how we liquidated Somoza!" [Anastasio Somoza was assassinated in Paraguay in September 1980.]

He then ordered his henchmen to throw me into the street naked, near the Pancasan traffic lights, and while they prepared for my transfer, one of them told the ones who were going to take me (intending for me to hear): "You know what has to be done!"

Half an hour later they made me get into a vehicle, completely naked, without shoes or eyeglasses, with my head on the floor, and took me to a place which I assumed would be the Plaza del Sol, where they pushed me out and said: "The keys are in the car in front of your house." When I was alone I tried to get my bearings and recognize the place, but I couldn't since I was not wearing glasses and it was still dark out, and moreover I felt dazed by the blows I had received. I tried to go several different ways but kept returning when I would realize I had gone the wrong way, until I saw a sign which said: HOTEL COLON, and an arrow on it. I deduced that I was in front of Restaurant LAC-MIEL, which is about five blocks from my house. I started to run to reach my home as soon as possible, going up the back street of TELCOR de Altamira, but I soon got tired since it is a very steep street, and I continued to walk as quickly as my strength would allow. An automobile went by full of drunk-looking people and when they saw me they started to yell. Another vehicle went by and turned toward the Embassy of Mexico and the people in it yelled at me from afar. Then a pick-up truck went on about half a block away, and I signaled to it but it went by. However it came back and caught up with me when I had turned toward the lake (half a block from DINSA), and I saw that the people in the truck were soldiers and included a woman who was also in uniform. They asked me what had happened to me and I told them I had been held up and robbed of even my clothes and shoes. They continued to interrogate me while they made me get into the back of the truck where there were two soldiers armed with rifles. My house was one block away and they took me there. We found my own vehicle in front of my house with the parking lights on. They asked me whether the vehicle was mine and I told them it was as I rang the doorbell. Although there were lights on at my house, it took a while before anyone came to open the door, for my wife, children, and some friends were all gathered together in an air-conditioned room at the back. I asked my son who opened the door to run and get me a pair of pants.

Only then did I find out that 15 minutes after having arrested me and having taken my wife's car, they came back to leave it and take my own vehicle. Inside the latter they had left my clothes, shoes, eyeglasses and other belongings.

The soldiers who had brought me in the pick-up truck continued their interrogation and appeared incredulous that I should be coming like this from State Security, and finally they left after filling in various pieces of paper.

I stayed home the rest of the week and gave instructions to my wife and children to tell anyone who telephoned me that I was asleep or not there, because I did not want my friends to see the injuries to my forehead and ears, which were the most visible, and I did not want the news to get around that I had been tortured. The blows that I had not felt at the time they were administered became visible and only began to hurt the following day and to this day I am still under treatment for the pain on my left side where the *comandante* hit me. The X-rays I had taken showed that, thank God, I do not have any broken ribs but do have some large hematomas.

I want to make it clear that State Security did not have and cannot have against me anything but the accusations related to education which UNAPAFACC, of which I am President, has made public by spoken and written means, since my activities as a citizen and as a professional have always been consistent with good citizenship and peaceful and democratic principles. My ideas and those of the organization that I represent and have represented for over three years have been expressed in public and cannot be considered subversive by a government which considers itself democratic in a supposedly free country. As Christians we have wanted to call the attention of the parents in the country to the educational process to which our children are subjected, which contradicts or ignores everything set forth in the Fundamental Statute which it is assumed still governs this country and which violates the right of parents wanting a truly liberating education for their children. For that purpose UNAPAFACC addressed an open letter to the Ministry of Education dated April 9, 1985 (which was not answered). Another public letter was sent, this time to President of the Republic, *Comandante* Daniel Ortega Saavedra, in which were denounced the threats made by the General Directorate of State Security against the parents of the city of Granada who had signed the first letter. Our second letter was published in *La Prensa* on May 4, but without the paragraph containing the denunciation, since the censors had deleted it. Then, on May 9, the General Assembly of Parents of the *Colegio Teresiano* was held, in which, as President of UNAPAFACC, it was my responsibility to explain to the parents the strategy the FSLN was following in education so as to manipulate young people in accordance with Marxist-Leninist doctrine in order to swell the ranks of the FSLN and, hence, those of international communism. The explanation was made using typical passages from official textbooks and class notes. A summary of this presentation was published in *La Prensa* May 12. On May 14 they proceeded to capture, torture, and threaten me to shut me up so that no one could interfere with the plan designed by the FSLN to corrupt and fool our children.

I wish to make it clear that I have never been affiliated with a political party or participated in any partisan activity, not because I look down on political endeavors but because I have always believed that there are people born with special abilities and a true vocation for politics and I have never considered myself to be one of them; that politics is a full-time occupation or demands a great deal of time from the citizen, while I have preferred to serve my fellow man and my country through my profession, my professional association, and the church, to which I have dedicated all my time with true devotion. I think that structures are not what is going to make the new man but rather that it is the "new man" who makes and humanizes temporal structures, and no political party or human ideological doctrine will solve problems related to the general welfare while leaving out the Gospel as a measure and principle of life. For 25 years, through my professional association and the service organizations in which I have been active, I have brought my critical and constructive judgment to bear on problems of public interest and I had never even been reprimanded much less abused, threatened, and repressed, as I have now been.

Nevertheless, I do not hold a grudge against anyone and I have forgiven my tormentors, for whom I have prayed to my Lord that He may put them on the road to Truth and Love. If I am filing this report it is because I believe that the Nicaraguan people, as well as other people subjugated by atheistic totalitarianism and materialism, have already paid a very high price in terror, blood, and pain to free themselves from an inhuman system that was frustrating their aspirations to live in peace and harmony and work to revive this country from the ashes in which it has always lived, and that it is a cruel and bloody joke for it to fall under another system even more brutal and repressive than the one that cost 50,000 lives to vanquish. I furthermore feel that the threat hanging over my life and that of my family should be on record, and that, in case something happens to us, those responsible should be known from this moment on, specifically *Comandante* Lenin Cerna, General Director of State Security, as direct perpetrator, and the National Directorate of the FSLN, as intellectual author of this type of act. I also wish to report that *Comandante* Cerna is seeking in some way to link me to so-called internal resistance groups to which I have never belonged and do not now belong; never in my life have I been involved in surreptitious activities against the authorities, since it goes against my Christian principles and the way I naturally am. May this go on record.

To conclude, I cry out for all those Nicaraguans who are practically "buried alive," possibly facing death in dungeons that are in themselves instruments of torture and means of debasing human dignity. It is not possible that in the twentieth century practices are being followed which humanity has condemned a thousand times and that there are no voices being raised to denounce them, while the *comandantes* of the National Directorate assure the world that nobody is tortured or executed here.

I pray to God that the hearts of all Nicaraguans may beat in unison with faith, love, hope, and charity so that together, as brothers, we can sing His praise and glorify His name.

Glory to God!

Sonofias Cisneros L.

Annex 3

The Permanent Commission on Human Rights

The Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua, an independent and internationally respected organization, has reported on human rights abuses under both the Somoza regime and the Sandinistas. The first document is a report from the Commission describing its history as well as Sandinista efforts to harass the Commission and impede its ability to collect and disseminate information. The second document is a letter to the editor published in the *New York Times* from Nina Shea, Program Director for the International League for Human Rights. The letter confirms information concerning past and recent government hostilities toward Nicaragua's only private human rights monitor.

Permanent Commission on Human Rights

The Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua is a local, non-governmental organization founded in 1977 by a group of people which included politicians, intellectuals, clergymen, and students. Its work during the Somoza dictatorship concentrated on the investigation and denunciation of the principal human rights violations. In this work we were connected with various international organizations, private as well as non-governmental.

The CPDH is composed of a National Directive Committee made up of its founders who meet once a month to analyze and evaluate the daily work. There is an Executive Board presided over by a member of the Directive [Committee] who, together with a team of four lawyers, carries out the policy of defending and promoting human rights.

For some years we were financed by organizations from both the Catholic and the Protestant churches, but now we support ourselves with donations from all sectors of the country. This situation has made it difficult to carry out many programs due to a lack of funds, in addition to the pressures exerted by the government on the donors.

Under the Somoza government, the CPDH decided to deal exclusively with violations committed by the government, but now we are receiving reports of violations committed by counterrevolutionary groups and we are beginning to investigate these cases for publication. Another of our activities involves human rights training and promotion in schools, labor unions, church organizations, and trade associations.

At first, our work consisted of receiving denunciations, investigating, and disclosing the violations. However, because of the change in circumstances, our work now includes giving legal advice to peasants dispossessed of their land, protecting victims of political persecution, and protecting and providing refuge to victims' families.

Our work begins upon receipt of a complaint. We can never act on our own initiative; our intervention must be prompted by a victim's or his family's complaint. We try to obtain sworn notarized statements in the presence of witnesses. We check complainants' identities through identification cards and, in the case of illiterates, through their fingerprints. We have prepared forms to gather more precise information. This data is processed monthly for the publication of the report, in which only the most serious cases are disclosed. At the same time, the lawyers pursue cases by filing briefs with the various administrative and judicial offices.

The CPDH has been attacked by the new government for defending the rights of Nicaraguans just as it did under the Somoza dictatorship. In 1981, the Minister of Justice decreed that the Commission's activity was illegal. Its headquarters were searched and taken over by that Ministry's officials and officials of the General Directorate of State Security. Its files and offices were broken into and the government took copies of our documents and information on the identities of the complainants. A week later, Jose Esteban Gonzalez, founder of the CPDH, was arrested and accused of "destabilizing the revolution" for having reported human rights violations committed by the new government. Gonzalez was released two weeks later, and the office was returned. A few months later, however, he would have to go into exile because there was an attempt to arrest him again.

The government later accused him of being involved in a conspiracy and sentenced him in absentia to 16 years of prison. The attacks by the government continue and are varied.

Since March of 1982, when a National State of Emergency was declared, any news regarding CPDH denunciations, or human rights violations in general, has been censored. A Commission employee spent two months in jail for distributing our informational pamphlets. That emergency decree, which in practice is still in force even through it was partially suspended by law, has allowed the government to obstruct the work of the CPDH. In the prisons, state offices, ministries, and legal offices, our lawyers are denied information, they are thrown out and sometimes insulted, or the officials or soldiers claim to be acting under "higher orders."

At this time the CPDH is facing an underhanded campaign by the government to destroy the CPDH by preventing it from meeting its objectives. Families of prisoners are threatened not to come to our offices; as people leave our offices after lodging complaints, unknown persons grab copies of their statements away from them; prisoners are prevented from giving information to their families regarding jail conditions.

The attacks will persist as long as the CPDH continues to defend the rights of Nicaraguans. To be able to pursue our work we need international support, not sympathy but concrete facts which will allow us to show the government that we are not alone in this struggle, that you are helping us.

November 29, 1984

NEW YORK TIMES **3 DECEMBER 1985**

Managua Muzzles Human Rights Watchdog

NINA H. SHEA
Program Director, International
League for Human Rights
New York, Nov. 24, 1985

To the Editor:

In ''Nicaragua Said to Order Censorship of Rights Unit'' (news story, Nov. 22), it is correctly reported that Nicaragua has announced a new censorship policy against the independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights. All publications will now require Interior Ministry approval before distribution, under penalty of arrest of commission members. There are more serious implications of this development, however.

The Permanent Commission is the *only* private general rights group in Nicaragua and all its other normal activities have already been foreclosed by the Government. Barred from all political trials, the commission is prevented from observing proceedings or providing legal aid to political defendants. Denied entry to political prisons, the commission is prohibited from ascertaining detention conditions or taking prisoner testimony—critical for monitoring torture.

Long before this order, the Government censored coverage of commission documentation by the national media. Recently, the Government extended the news blackout to forbid Catholic Radio from broadcasting a commission reading, without commentary, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In July, commission worker José Soza Jarquin was imprisoned and charged with subversion. After vigorous protest from my organization and the personal intervention of two U.S. Congressmen, Soza was released a month later just as arbitrarily as he had been arrested. In the past, other commission employees have been detained and released on the condition that they spy on commission activities for the Government.

If the Permanent Commission is now prevented from circulating its own reports, it will be left without a function. Enforcing the new censorship order then will be tantamount to shutting the group down.

The existence of independent groups that monitor, report on and defend human rights is an essential requisite for safeguarding citizens' rights. Intolerance of this watchdog bodes poorly for human rights in Nicaragua.

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Annex 4

The National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

The National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights is the official human rights commission of the Nicaraguan government. Rather than work to improve human rights practices in Nicaragua, it concentrates on defending the Sandinistas' human rights record from international criticism and focusing attention on alleged abuses committed by the democratic resistance.

The first document is a statement by Mateo Jose Guerrero on the evolution of the CNPPDH from an organization which had some success in promoting human rights to a propaganda tool of the FSLN. Guerrero served as Executive Director of the CNPPDH until early 1985 when he went into exile.

The second document is a statement by Bayardo de Jesus Payan Hidalgo concerning the activities of the CNPPDH and its efforts to have foreign delegations prepare reports favorable to the Sandinista regime. In his capacity as head of the CNPPDH's office of Budget and Finance, Payan was charged with paying the bills of some of these delegations. Payan went into exile in January 1985.

Information Provided by Mateo Jose Guerrero

In March 1985, Mateo Jose GUERRERO left Nicaragua to study English and subsequently defected. Since 1982, Guerrero had served on the staff of the Nicaraguan government's official National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (CNPPDH), first as its Administrative Director and later as its Executive Director. The CNPPDH had been formed in 1980 amid growing charges that the Nicaraguan government was failing to honor its commitment to respect human rights. Ostensibly the mission of the CNPPDH was to identify and rectify possible violations of human rights in Nicaragua. It was also charged with serving liaison in human rights matters with foreign governments and international organizations. By law, the CNPPDH was an autonomous body that, because of the nature of its responsibilities, worked closely with the Foreign and Interior Ministries. During his years with the CNPPDH, Guerrero observed that the Commission became steadily less concerned about championing human rights and was transformed into little more than a propaganda arm of the Nicaraguan government.

When the CNPPDH was first established in 1980, its board of commissioners included independent and vocal defenders of human rights. Two such members were Ismael Reyes Rojas, a prominent businessman and president of the Nicaraguan Red Cross, and Edgard Macias, a leader of the Popular Social Christian Party and Vice Minister of Labor. The first president of the CNPPDH was Leonte Herdocia, a supporter of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and a respected proponent of human rights. In its early years, the Commission was allowed some liberty to investigate human rights abuses and had access to prisons.

By 1982, the Nicaraguan government had dropped many of the original commissioners and replaced them with new commissioners who generally were sympathetic to the FSLN. (The FSLN subsequently fabricated stories to discredit those commissioners who had been too independent and to force them into exile. Macias was accused of being a U.S. intelligence agent and fled Nicaragua in mid-1982, and Reyes followed in 1983.) Six of the new CNPPDH commissioners placed the political goals of the Sandinistas above genuine human rights. These were:

- Agustin Fuentes, a newsman with the pro-Sandinista newspaper *El Nuevo Diario* and the owner of *Radio Noticias*, both of which are subsidized by the Nicaraguan government. Interior Minister Tomas Borge has taken Fuentes as his personal media representative during trips abroad.
- Jose Maria Alvarado, a captain in the Interior Ministry and head of the government's Telecommunications and Postal Office (TELCOR).
- Gonzalo Ramirez Morales, a lieutenant in the Sandinista People's Army who works as a doctor in the "Davila Bolanos" military hospital in Managua. Ramirez is currently president of the Nicaraguan Red Cross which the Sandinistas took over in 1982-83. He formerly was Ambassador to Venezuela.
- Zulema Baltodano Marchenaro, the leader of the Sandinista organization "Madres de los Heroes y Martires" (Mothers of the Heroes and Martyrs), and mother of FSLN commander Monica Baltodano, coordinator of municipal affairs.
- Sixto Ulloa, an FSLN delegate to the National Assembly and a leader of the pro-Sandinista church organization CEPAD.
- Ramiro Lacayo Montealegre, an FSLN delegate to the National Assembly.

By 1982, the CNPPDH's access to prisons was restricted, and the Interior Ministry's General Directorate of State Security (DGSE) maximum security prison at El Chipote was placed off limits.

The link between the Foreign Ministry and CNPPDH was Commission president Herdocia who also held the rank of Ambassador and served as head of the Ministry's International Organizations Division. At first, the Foreign Ministry's influence over the CNPPDH was subtle, but over time its control became more overt. For example, reports prepared and published by the Foreign Ministry were falsely attributed to the CNPPDH.

The Foreign Ministry's domination of the CNPPDH became more heavy-handed following Herdocia's death in November 1983. Alejandro Bendana, Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry, assumed responsibility for monitoring the CNPPDH and moved rapidly to strengthen his control over the Commission's activities. Bendana met regularly with CNPPDH members and gave them instructions about what positions they should adopt at international conferences, how they should impress visiting delegations with Nicaragua's human rights record, etc. For example:

- In November 1984, as Guerrero and Commission member Lacayo were preparing to travel to Spain to attend the First Ibero-American Congress on Human Rights, Bendana instructed them to highlight all reports by human rights groups that were favorable to the Nicaraguan government and to focus attention on alleged U.S. aggression toward Nicaragua, particularly the mining of ports.
- In April 1984, Bendana instructed Guerrero to take charge of a visit by Juan Mendez of Americas Watch, a human rights organization based in the United

States which had written favorably about the Nicaraguan government's human rights record. The CNPPDH was ordered to assist Mendez, providing him with a car and arranging his interviews with government entities such as the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice and the People's Anti-Somocista Tribunals. Afterward, the CNPPDH was required to report to Bendana on the results of the visit.

- In September 1984, Bendana ordered the CNPPDH to provide full support to American lawyers Reed Brody and James Bordelon who were preparing a report on human rights abuses allegedly committed by the armed opposition—a report to be used in the United States by groups opposed to U.S. policy. The CNPPDH provided Brody and Bordelon with an office at its headquarters in Managua, lodging in an FSLN-owned hotel managed by Commission member Zulema Baltodano, and transportation. It also paid all the bills incurred during their visit, totaling some 50,000 cordobas, which Bendana agreed to reimburse out of Foreign Ministry funds. Sister Mary Hartman, an American nun who works for the CNPPDH, arranged interviews and sent Brody and Bordelon to investigate cases she believed would have the most impact on the lawyers and the public.

In January 1985, Bendana ordered the CNPPDH to cease investigating all cases of human rights abuses by the Nicaraguan government, particularly those connected with the military draft (Patriotic Military Service—SMP) or the forced relocations of communities in Ocotal, Matagalpa, and Jinotega. Bendana stated that, acting on the authority of President Daniel Ortega and Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto, he would personally direct the CNPPDH for the purpose of promoting an international offensive by the Nicaraguan government denouncing abuses allegedly committed by anti-Sandinista forces. He noted that the CNPPDH would help establish a network of foreign human rights organizations to publicize these abuses throughout the world.

Bendana also stated that the Nicaraguan government was dissatisfied with the performance of the CNPPDH and complained that some members were failing to protect the regime from criticism. He ordered an internal investigation for the purpose of purging those who supported investigations independent of government influence. He revealed plans to restructure the commission and appoint new members and staff who were totally loyal to the FSLN. The new president would be Plutarco Anduray Palma, a close friend of Interior Minister Tomas Borge. Anduray had been recommended to Bendana by Captain Raul Cordon Morice, head of the national penitentiary system. (The CNPPDH had a long history of problems with Cordon, who had denied them access to prisons, refused meetings with commission officials, and torn up CNPPDH letters in the faces of commission members. He had declared that he did not care about the CNPPDH and responded only to the authority of the FSLN.)

The case of Ramon Ordonez Ramirez is one example of how the Nicaraguan government stymied Guerrero's efforts to investigate cases of human rights abuse. Ordonez, a 17-year-old farm worker, was arrested by State Security (DGSE) agents in January 1984. The family filed a writ of habeas corpus, and the court appointed Guerrero its agent to locate Ordonez. The DGSE denied ever holding Ordonez, although Guerrero obtained testimony from prisoners confirming that Ordonez was being held at El Chipote jail. In September 1984, junta member Rafael Cordova Rivas handed Guerrero a statement listing prisoners to be pardoned and claiming that Ordonez had already been set free. Cordova Rivas ordered Guerrero to release the statement to the media as if it had originated from the CNPPDH. The CNPPDH board of commissioners held an emergency meeting and decided not to publish the false statement. The next day, however, the pro-FSLN newspaper *El Nuevo Diario* printed the statement attributing it to the CNPPDH. At the First Ibero-American Congress on Human Rights in Spain in November 1984, the independent CPDH raised the Ordonez case, but CNPPDH commission member Lacayo was able to divert attention away from the matter by falsely stating that the CNPPDH was actively investigating the case.

October 1985

Statement by Bayardo de Jesus Payan Hidalgo

My name is Bayardo de Jesus PAYAN Hidalgo, a citizen of Managua, Nicaragua, and former official of the Sandinista government. I left my country January 24, 1985, for the following reasons: The principal reason for my decision is the political, social, and economic system which the nine Sandinista commanders installed. The people of Nicaragua have to do whatever they are ordered by the Sandinista government through their political organizations such as the Sandinista Defense Committees, the Sandinista Workers Central, Sandinista Youth-July 19, etc. This is because they fear the aggressive policies of the government.

Cases in which the people must work against their will:

In all the cities, neighborhoods, and districts the people must stand guard over all events in the area; therefore, the average citizen does not feel free to act as he wishes even in his own home, because he is always under the vigilance of the Sandinista Defense Committees. The same goes for jobs, schools, universities, etc. Each citizen is also forced to perform voluntary labor (Red and Black) [the colors of the Sandinista party] at work, in the city, in the countryside, schools, etc. They must also attend political meetings, FSLN demonstrations, etc.

The consequences of abstaining from these activities are the following: The citizens are branded as reactionaries and counterrevolutionaries; they are fired; they delay their ration cards for obtaining basic goods; they are victims of insults and humiliations carried out by the organizations. Then the people have no other choice but to toe the line; because it is said that in revolutionary Nicaragua you have to be revolutionaries or it will appear that you are supporting yankee imperialism.

Another of the reasons for leaving is that the internationalists are treated far better than Nicaraguans. They lack nothing; most are given good homes, vehicles, authority, that is, everything that Nicaraguans cannot obtain. Another reason is that there is always a shortage of basic goods such as food, medicine, public transport, spare parts, and even water. Also, the persecution to which young men are subjected for Patriotic Military Service—they are pursued in movie theaters, schools, bus stops, in their homes, at any time of day or night. The worst thing is that young boys are taken away constantly who are below the lawful age for military service; that is, they conscript any boy big enough to hold a rifle. There are also constant violations of human rights. It is worthwhile to point out that all the political leaders of these organizations are paid by the Sandinista government to carry out these activities.

Narration regarding the operations of my last employer:

In 1980 the Sandinista government founded the National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights as an entity of the central government. The primary reasons for the creation of this institution were to give the impression abroad that human rights are respected. But in reality, it was created to discredit the Permanent Commission on Human Rights, in order to make propaganda for the Sandinista government both at home and abroad, since the only accusations taken to the official commission are those that favor FSLN. This occurs because the people know that it is a Sandinista organization and they are afraid to present charges against the government because of future consequences. Therefore, if the people should dare to file a complaint, they do it at the Permanent Commission on Human Rights.

The propaganda carried out by the official commission is in the form of apparent appeals for the government to pardon about forty political prisoners each year. When the pardons are granted, all means of communication are used to announce that it was the CNPPDH which secured the pardons. In reality, however, it is the Council of State which beforehand reports to the CNPPDH whom they are going to pardon.

The National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights has a lawyer who conducts the investigation of cases of human rights abuses. This man is named Rene Lopez Martinez, and he is the Secretary General of the Sandinista Union. He is a Mexican national, and he is more Sandinista than Sandino. He is best known for applying pressure to workers so that they carry out the tasks of the revolution. The question arises, then: What good report and investigation can this internationalist complete?

There is also another important office in the CNPPDH, named the Social Affairs Office. It is devoted primarily to receiving foreign delegations, holding press conferences about the human rights situation in Nicaragua for Nicaraguan and international journalists, and maintaining communication with the penal system.

This office is under the direction of the North American, Sister Mary Hartman. She enjoys privileges such as the gift of a new diesel automobile, free gas, and other things. She also enjoys the goodwill and confidence of Commander Tomas Borge Martinez, and is a very good Sandinista. So good, in fact, that she told me that the nuns at the Maria Mazarello School were reactionaries because they criticized the government. So I wonder, could this woman state anything that is not partisan?

Since she is in charge of attending to foreign delegations, in September 1984 she welcomed the reporters and lawyers Reed Brody and Jim Bordelon. These gentlemen said that they would be at the CNPPDH to complete a book about human rights in Nicaragua. In fact, I was struck by the kindness extended to them by officials. From September to January they were coordinated by Sister Mary and other officials of the CNPPDH in conducting their work. They were provided with transportation, food, and lodging from the very beginning. Mr. Brody was characterized by his fondness for the FSLN, for he made it known that he was a friend of Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, showing a picture of him hugging the Commander. He urged people to vote for the FSLN, and he expressed himself as strongly opposed to North American policy, speaking ill of President Ronald Reagan, etc.

Later I realized what the book they were preparing was all about. Then my conclusions were that these men were completing a propaganda document for the FSLN, since they did not even see fit to visit the CPDH which is independent and to which the people can present their complaints without any fear.

I can certify to the foregoing references to the National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights because I was an official of that institution, having served as head of the office of Budget and Finance until January 15, 1985.

Bayardo de Jesus Payan Hidalgo

Annex 5

The State of Emergency

The following document is a report by the Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua (CPDH) on the October 15, 1985, State of Emergency.

Nicaragua Under the State of Emergency

In general, the human rights situation in Nicaragua, so promising in the beginning of the revolutionary period (July 1979), has been deteriorating throughout the 6½ years of the Sandinista Government. This deterioration has attained its highest level since October 15, 1985 when the latest "State of Emergency" was established.

Although this latest State of Emergency has been well publicized overseas, the states and laws of emergency have been indiscriminately applied in Nicaragua. In the 6½ years of the Sandinista Government four states or laws of emergency have been declared which have partially or totally violated the principal rights of Nicaraguans for a total of more than 4 years.

As a complement to these states of emergency, a series of decrees have been issued which in themselves violate the pacts and agreements made by the government on the subject of human rights and which affect almost all aspects of national life, since they are unilaterally applied on the part of the government, without giving the persons affected the opportunity to make use of their rights through a just process; for example: the law of Declarations of Public Utility, which permits the State to seize any property or business; the Absentee Law, by which individuals who are out of the country for more than 6 months can have their property confiscated; the Law for those who request Political Asylum, which permits the confiscation of the property of anyone who seeks political asylum; the Law of the Normative System of Salary Organization (SNOTS) by which the Government establishes how much each worker should earn in the country, ignoring all collective and contract agreements; the Law of the Sandinista Police which allows sentencings of up to 2 years when "there may not be proof to send an individual to the order of a regular judge"; the Law of Maintenance of Order and Public Security which allows the confiscation of the properties of anyone sentenced to more than 5 years in prison, etc. All these laws have institutionalized the violation of human rights in our country.

The situation of actual violations, on the other had, is no less critical, being committed at times by the highest military authorities, evidencing a systematic violation of human rights in its most pervasive form.

At the CPDH we have received an average of 100 complaints monthly on violations of: the right to life, prisoners, disappearances, tortures and maltreatments of prisoners, labor union persecution, persecution of members of opposing political parties at all levels, religious persecution, violation of the right to private property, violation of the right to free expression and information, the functioning of Exception Tribunals where prisoners are tried without legal guarantees, violation of the Military Service Law, of education rights, pressuring and harassment of citizens so that they become informers for the organs of security, mass arrests of peasants, removal of rural communities to "settlements" where they are forced to join Agricultural Cooperatives directed by the governing party and where the peasants are also forced to join para-military organizations directed by State Security and/or the Sandinista Party. The average of 100 monthly complaints, which is rising (from January 6 to January 31, 143 complaints were received) is barely a reflection of what is happening in the country, since for a variety of motives: fear, ignorance, distance, etc., many persons do not bring their problems to the CPDH of Nicaragua.

The current State of Emergency has been directed principally at the repression of civic and religious organizations within Nicaragua. The main leaders of the majority of opposition political parties have been taken to State Security offices where they have been documented, threatened, and detained for brief periods in an evident effort to scare them. The Nicaraguan Social Christian Party and the Nicaraguan Conservative Party have been the most repressed, some of their low-level and intermediate staff have been put in prison, many of whom are still being held.

The Catholic Church has been another of the main targets of the repression. The jailing of seminarists, leaders of charismatic groups, leading members of parochial communities which support the Church, as well as the summonses of 15 priests to the offices of State Security and the Sandinista Police, where they were photographed, fingerprinted, and threatened with imprisonment, and the prohibition of the holding of religious demonstrations without authorization of the Interior Ministry, have been some of the measures taken against the Church. In addition, other actions have been taken which directly affect the pastoral work of the Catholic Church such as: the military take-over of the offices of the Church's Social Promotion Commission, the suspension of the publication of the periodical *Iglesia*, the confiscation of the printing press of the Archiepiscopal Curia of Managua and finally the shutting-down of "Radio Católica" which is the voice of the Catholic Church.

The labor-union centrals have been no less affected. The central offices of the Nicaraguan Workers Central were taken over militarily on October 24, 1985 and three of its leaders were jailed. On December 14, 1985 the Secretary General of the organization was imprisoned and he is still being held in the subterranean State Security prison in Managua, called El Chipote.

On the other hand, press censorship has been applied to the maximum to the daily newspaper, *La Prensa*, which on different occasions could not be published because almost all the information was censored, even the information that had nothing to do with military information or matters of State Security.

In an evident desire to control any form of free expression in the country, different magazines, bulletins, reports, flyers, etc. have been prohibited by the Directorate of Social Communication Media, which is an agency of the Interior Ministry: The Nicaraguan Conservative Party has been banned from publishing its monthly information bulletin; the publication of the "solidarity" bulletin of the Confederation of Labor Unification (CUS) has been banned; so too the mentioned periodical of the Catholic Church, *Iglesia*; the monthly publication of the Superior Board of Private Enterprise (COSEP) has been banned; three journalists who published a small bulletin of daily news called *PRISMA* have been imprisoned at El Chipote and the publication has been suspended.

The Nicaraguan Permanent Commission for Human Rights itself has been obliged to suspend its monthly reports on the human rights situation for not submitting them for prior censorhip by the Interior Ministry. The attitude of the Interior Ministry is completely incompatible, by insisting that a human rights organization which serves as a parameter for violations of these rights should submit its reports for censorship to the very Ministry that is chiefly responsible for these violations.

The prison situation, is itself difficult and precarious in regard to conditions and treatment of prisoners (see CPDH report entitled Nicaraguan Prison Situation, 1985), has become even more difficult, especially for political prisoners. For example, at the end of December 1985, LUIS MORA SANCHEZ, journalist and a leader of the Social Democratic Party, was subjected to a brutal beating which left him with a broken tooth and a permanent and visible scar on his nose. The CPDH has received numerous letters signed collectively by political prisoners at the "Cárcel Modelo" and the "Zona Franca" prison, in which they desperately narrate the dramatic situation that they are going through. Among other things: constant threats of death in case the prisons are ever attacked militarily, suspension of visits, moving prisoners to other cells, lack of sunshine and being sprayed with putrid water when they do go out in the sunshine, confiscation of the foodstuffs which their relatives bring them or confiscation of utensils supplied by the International Committee of the Red Cross, lack of medical attention for sick prisoners, and the placement in the cells of groups of "common prisoners" armed with knives, chains, and other weapons who beat and rob the political prisoners of their provisions, etc.

We cannot neglect to mention that Nicaragua is the country with the largest number of political prisoners. A truly conservative and rising figure would be at least 6,500 political prisoners, aside from some 2,500 ex-Somoza guards or persons accused of having been Somoza guards, who have been in jail since 1979, and the majority of whom are treated like political prisoners.

The State Security jails (investigation jails) with their truly inhuman conditions, to which no international human rights organization has access, are completely crammed with prisoners. In the cells of the El Chipote prison near Managua, the prisoners are kept in isolation, in completely dark, hermetically sealed cells whose only ventilation is through a tube which goes from the roof to the surface. The prisoners are identified by numbers and are submitted to all types of torture to make them sign statements that they are not allowed to read. In the CPDH there are hundreds of testimonies which attest to the physical as well psychological torture and the utilization of drugs during interrogations (See publication of the testimony of SOFONIAS CISNEROS). The State Security prisoners have no recourse to any legal mechanism.

Alongside this inhuman system functions the system of prisons for "export," which means prisons where international delegations are taken to admire the positive environment which a reduced number of prisoners enjoy. These prisoners have been "informers" for State Security in other prisons. These prisons, in order to give off a false impression of the penal system, are called "Open System Farms" and have been publicized by organizations which supposedly defend human rights, but evidently follow the same line of ideology as the governing party of our country.

Another of the manifestations of the State of Emergency imposed on October 15, 1985 has been the implementation of mass arrests of peasants in the rural areas of the country. Hundreds of peasants accused of being "collaborators with the contras" have been taken to regional State Security prisons. The criterion used in order to arrest these peasants or in order to deem them "reactionaries" or "potential counterrevolutionaries" has been their failure to join organizations controlled by the Sandinista Party or by the Sandinista Army, such as the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS), or the Sandinista People's Militia (MPS), or the National Farmers Union (UNAG), or the Rural Workers Association (ATC), etc. The CPDH has received reports of the arrests of close to 500 peasants since the establishment of the National State of Emergency, in different areas of the country, and who are all still in prison. Almost 300 peasants were arrested in December 1985 in the Nueva Guinea region in the southeastern part of the country and taken to the prisons of the State Security and the Penitentiary System of the Chontales department. In the northern region in the Nueva Segovia department, a few days after the establishment of the State of Emergency, the arrests of 128 peasants accused of being "runners" for the contras were officially announced, and in the Estelí department the arrests of 50 peasants were reported in the month of November.

Four cases of peasants, who were found dead after having been arrested and who showed signs of having been tortured, have been reported to the CPDH since

October 15, 1985; among them were the militants from the Social Christian Party ZACARIAS MARTINEZ and DANIEL GONZALEZ RIVERA.

The phenomenon of disappearances of persons who have been arrested has also intensified. Sixteen (16) cases have been reported to the CPDH following the declaration of the State of Emergency and in spite of the steps taken by their relatives as well as by officials of the CPDH, the authorities deny the arrests, even though in some cases they were made in front of witnesses.

The Nicaraguan CPDH perfectly understands the difficult military situation that exists in the country as well as the influence of external factors, on the part of both power bases in our internal situation, but it considers that this situation has an internal origin, which begins with the confiscation of the liberties of the Nicaraguan people, and the deviance from the original plan of the Nicaraguan revolution. Measures such as the current State of Emergency, with the characteristics described, only serve to polarize the military situation and diminish the possibilities of a pacific and civilized solution to our problems.

MANAGUA, February 1, 1986

Nicaraguan Permanent Commission of Human Rights

Annex 6

The Situation of *La Prensa*

As the only source of non-Sandinista information available to many Nicaraguans, the independent newspaper *La Prensa* was a particular target of Sandinista repression. *La Prensa* was a relentless critic of the Somoza regime; the assassination of its editor, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Cardenal, in January 1978 sparked the revolution that eventually put the Sandinistas in power. Since the revolution, *La Prensa's* continuing endorsement of democratic values has led to open confrontation with the Sandinistas. The Sandinistas, recognizing the political costs of closing *La Prensa*, muzzled it instead through heavy censorship. In June 1986, they closed it indefinitely.

The first document is a report prepared by *La Prensa* in December 1984 describing Sandinista harassment and censorship.

The second document is an August 1982 open letter by Violeta Chamorro regarding Sandinista censorship. Mrs. Chamorro is the widow of martyred *La Prensa* editor Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Cardenal and one of the original five members of the 1979 revolutionary junta. The Sandinistas censored this letter inside Nicaragua, forcing Mrs. Chamorro to look abroad to have it published.

The third document is a statement by Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Barrios, son of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Cardenal and Violeta Chamorro and a co-director of *La Prensa*, at the time he went into exile in December 1984.

The fourth document is a sampling of one week's censored articles which demonstrates the arbitrary and totally partisan nature of Sandinista censorship. This sampling was compiled January 1985, just as the new ''democratically elected'' government was taking power.

The fifth document is the *La Prensa* statement of December 2, 1985, protesting increased Sandinista harassment of the paper. The statement itself was censored, and for having distributed copies of the statement to foreign journalists before the notification of censorship was delivered, *La Prensa* was ordered closed by the Sandinista government on December 7-9, 1985.

The final document is a letter by Roberto Cardenal Chamorro, an editor of *La Prensa*, describing Sandinista repression of the press printed in *The Washington Post* on February 9, 1986.

BRIEF HISTORY RELATED
TO
TEMPORARY CLOSE OUTS, CENSORINGS HOSTILITIES AND THREATS AGAINST THOSE WORKING FOR
LA PRENSA
AT MANAGUA, NICARAGUA

December of 1984

LA PRENSA
APARTADO No. 192
MANAGUA, NICARAGUA

BRIEF HISTORY RELATED TO TEMPORARY CLOSE OUTS, CENSORINGS, HOSTILITIES AND THREATS AGAINST THOSE WORKING FOR LA PRENSA AT MANAGUA, NICARAGUA.

Since the victory of the Revolution on July 19, 1979, the newspaper **LA PRENSA** of Managua, Nicaragua, has been subjected to hostilities, persecution, censoring, in different forms of mayor or lesser degree depending on the political circumstances into which the Sandinist Revolution has been evolving.

Since the early days after **LA PRENSA** reappeared on August 16, 1979 with a line of critical backing of the Revolution and with a high degree of independence, the commanders of the Revolution showed themselves highly critical and hostile in their speeches against **LA PRENSA** for publishing critics against the government. The overall effect of these speeches was contrary to the expected intentions of he commandants, as the more they criticized us the higher the circulation of the newspaper went, showing that the people had a great need of an independent and critical media of communications.

In the presence of this independence the Sandinist government tried on April 1980 to destrory **LA PRENSA** from the inside, by instigatin the workers union of **LA PRENSA** to take over the physical installations of the newspaper and demanding a the some time the appointment of the Ing. Xavier Chamorro C. as the sole Director and giving him all the power to make of **LA PRENSA** a newspaper totally pro-sandinist.

As the Board of Directors refused to abide, the Sandinist promoted the foundation of El Nuevo Diario thinking that **LA PRENSA** was not going to have the backing of the people and consequentially would tend to disappear. Realities have been totally different, since El Nuevo Diario in spite of having been formed with 70 percent of the former personnel did not get the backing of the readers and **LA PRENSA** almost duplicated ist circulation on staying totally independent and beingable to be even more critical.

From this conflict on the strategies used against **LA PRENSA** have changed in different ways, like temporary close outs; intimidation of its main officials and to the owners of distribution agencies by using the mobs and making threats; by prohibiting state controlled institutions to make advertising contracts with **LA PRENSA;** by not authorizing the necessary foreing currency for imports of raw materials; by censoring news material, even news already published by official newspaper to be published; delays in the approval of the material subject to censoring, arriving to he highest percentag of dalay of seven daily hours during the time of stronger hostilities.

We present hereinafter a brief summary of hostilities impossed upon us.

a) Previous censoring

Since March 16, 1982 when the State of Emergency was put into effect we have suffered previous censoring of all news material, even advertising. The sternness put on by the censoring agent has had ups downs according to the political aspect of the moment; what has stayed more or less constant has been the time taken by the Media Communications Direction employee to check the news material.

We present hereinafter a chart of percentages of monthly censoring suffered by **LA PRENSA** during the months from February until November 1984. Percentages are base on the total amount of inches of text writings, photographs, photograpg foot writings, and titles that they censored from the closing pages, (first, last and fifth pages).

MONTH	CENSORED PORCENTAGE	TIME TAKEN FOR CENSORING
February	23.09%	3.02 Hours
March	19.30%	3.04 Hours
April	27.95%	3.05 Hours
May	30.57%	3.07 Hours
June	25.77%	3.24 Hours
July (before the 19th.)	45.26%	3.43 Hours
July (after the 19th.)	6.75%	2.57 Hours
August	18.80%	2.46 Hours
September	11.56%	3.05 Hours
October	15.85%	2:56 hours
November	29.37%	3:19 hours

b) Temporary Close Outs

Between July and October 1981, the newspaper **LA PRENSA** was closed during five different occasions by order of the Media Communications Direction; each close out during two editions except the third one on August 19 Which lasted for three editions; all these close outs with the exception of one, in which **LA PRENSA** was given 24 hours to prove the truthfulness of a third party's interview, were impossed without the right of defense and without any previous trial or proof presentations.

As a consequense of previous censoring, **LA PRENSA** has not been able to circulate on 27 different occasions (see adendum No. 1), two by order of the Media Communications Direction and the other 25 on its own decision, due to excesive censoring or in protest because of the importance of the news material censored, as it happened when we were not allowed to publish the letter of Pope John II addressed to the Nicaragua Bishops. The last two times we were not able to circulate was on August 6 and October 22, 1984, in which editions all photographs, news chronicles and speeches by the leadners of La Coordinadora Democrática, Dr. Arturo Cruz and Adán Fletes, in Matagalpa and Chinandega, were censored, and the withdrawal of the Liberal Party of the electoral campain that also was heavely censored, on October 22.

c) The Mobs and the Close Out of Agencies

The mobs have become hostile with the installations of **LA PRENSA** in several occasions, the homes of its main officials, like Mrs. Violeta Chamorro, Jaime Chamorro, Pedro J. Chamorro, Carlos Holmann, Mrs. Margarita Chamorro, an old woman of 84 years age and mother of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro C., the Marthyr of Public Freedom.

Distributing agents have also become victims to the mobs, having suffered threats of putting their homes and business places on fire if they continued selling **LA PRENSA.** *As consequence to this 20 of 150 Agencies distributing* **LA PRENSA** *in all the country, have been forced to close due to hostilities and four others have changed owners because the previous one were frightened of going on with so many risks.*

d) Attacks to other Officials

Other officials have been subjected to hostilities with letterings on their houses with the result that 20% of the employees and workers at **LA PRENSA** *have resigned, the mojority of them, to abandon the country.*

One of our editors Horacio Ruiz Solís was kidnapped, beaten and left unconscious, his car was stolen and police authorities have not been able to discover the assailments, nor the whereabouts of the car that has never been able to recover.

Our reporter Luis Mora Sánchez suffered several months of jail imprisonment just for being a reporter for Radio Impacto from Costa Rica and lately accused of having connections with the counter revolutionaries. According to his account, he was tortured in order to force him to make slanderous statements against **LA PRENSA** *and its Directors in a video-tape that was run through the Sandinist's T.V. Station. So too, the photographer of* **LA PRENSA,** *Jorge Ortega Rayo was imprissoned for several months, both were trialed by Courts of Exceptions, found guilty and ultimately pardoned.*

e) Economic Pressures

During the year 1982 and part of 1983, LA PRENSA was denied the necesary foreign exchange to import raw materials. The government has a stric control on foreign currency. **LA PRENSA** *was able to subsist through loans (in dollars payable in cordobas) and some grants, specially from Venezuela's Private Enterprise, from Germany and the U.S.A. that were duly registered at the Central Bank of Nicaragua.*

By the end of 1983 when the above aids became depleted and due to the government through the Ministry of the Interior, Commander Tomas Borge, promised to furnish the necesary foreing exchange so that we could keep publishing the newspaper. This promise has been kept in part, as in spite al haring, on our part, deposited the corresponding previous deposit in cordobas, we have not been able to obtain the necessary dollars, having not been able to pay some of our suppliers, and they on their part are refusing to deliver our new orders. We believe that delay in paying in due to the nation's scarcity of foreing currency and that it. is not the cause of hostilities against **LA PRENSA.**

Nowadays news paper is being supplied by the government payable in national currency, but the only problem that we have related to news paper, are those of the last two orders that we bought directly abroad and that we have not been able to pay due to the above mentioned explanations.

We have been able to verify that the government has directed all state controlled enterprises not to advertise in **LA PRENSA.**

This measure has not affected us because of the page limitation, (by law we can only publish 12 pages for each edition), **LA PRENSA** *has its daily advertising cuota totally filled up, but we believe this measure to be descriminating.*

We have also been able to verify that the Ministry of Culture through the Association of Sandinist Workers for Culture, has prohibited its associates to publish any poems or literary compositions in **LA PRENSA LITERARIA.**

Besides the above described hostilities we have suffered threats voiced by the commandants in their speeches or through the different media, like the one where Commander Humberto Ortega, Minister of Defensa said, that when the invasion became a reality they were going to hang us all from the trees; or when Barricada and Radio Sandino said, that to those people in **LA PRENSA** *we are going to peel their skins off, or that they did not see how we could save ourselves from a lost bullet penetrating our heads. Furthermore we are always getting through the telephone frequent threats and also through private courriers telling us that too many of us working for* **LA PRENSA,** *our names were listed in some kind of a list...*

f) Confiscations

On August 29, 1984 the total edition of LA PRENSA destined to the western part of the country (namely Leon, Chinandega, Chichigalpa, Corinto), etc., was confiscated at the city of Leon on behalf of the National Security Police, and they did not give any explanation whatsoever. This edition was previously censored, for up to this date we still do not know what was the reason behind this confiscation.

December of 1984

ADDENDUM No. 1

CONTROL OF THE DAYS THAT THE NEWSPAPER "LA PRENSA" HAS NOT CIRCULATED BY DISPOSITION OF THE MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTION OR BECAUSE EXCESSIVE CENSORING MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO DO SO. ALL SINCE THE PROMULGATION OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY GOING INTO EFECT ON MARCH 15, 1982.

YEAR: 1982

DATE:	**MOTIVES**
1.) MARCH 24	*Excessive censoring by MCD.*
2.) MARCH 28	*Main news censored: Elections in El Salvador.*
3.) AUGUST 9	*Excessive censoring by MCD*
4.) AUGUST 11	*Main news censored: Attack of the People's Organizations to Catholic Priest Bismarck Carballo, defense by LA PRENSA.*
5.) AUGUST 12	*Main news censored. Pronouncement by the Curia Bar, in the case of Priest Carballo.*
6.) NOVEMBER 18	*Excessive censoring by MCD*
7.) NOVEMBER 24	*Main news censored: Report of OLP from Moscow.*
YEAR: 1983	
8.) MAY 3	*Excessive censoring by MCD.*
9.) JULY 12	*Excessive censoring by MCD.*
10.) AUGUST 12	*Main news censored: Denial of Salary Raise: (excessively censored).*
11.) AUGUST 14	*Close out ordered by the Ministry of the Interior for having published the day before a protest against the stoning of Mrs. Violeta Chamorro carried on by the mobs of the People's Organizations.*
12.) AUGUST 23	*Main news censored: Pronoucement from the Vatican Embassy.*
13.) AUGUST 31	*Main news censored: Letter on the Patriotic Military Service (Forced). Late resolution.*
14.) OCTOBER 4	*Excessive censoring.*
15.) OCTOBER 5	*In protest for censoring the answer from LA PRENSA on the communication.*
16.) NOVEMBER 2	*Excessive censoring, Curia Bar protest for the happenings of the previous Sunday. Mobs in several churches.*
YEAR: 1984	
17.) JANUARY 27	*Excessive censoring, also the prohibition from MCD of the news on Dr. Arturo Cruz's declarations, and the Announcement from The Bishop's Conference in the case of the High School LA SALLE.*
18.) FEBRUARY 1	*Excessive censoring. Late resolution. Among censored news were: The case of Bernardino Larios, LA SALLE Editorial, they decided to step back the order of suspension of elections, which was the main news.*
19.) MARCH 22	*Defense by PJCHB, on the case of the Free Man.*
20.) APRIL 5	*Main news censored: Arrival of Alfredo Cesar to Nicaragua.*
21.) MAY 18	*Editorial in support of Luis Mora-Student beaten down (censored).*
22.) MAY 31	*Main news: Criminal Attempt against Edén Pastora in a Press Conference.*
23.) JUNE 15	*Excessive censoring, specially as to photographic material related to floods caused by rainy season.*
24.) JUNE 18	*Excessive censoring, photograph and information on the subdivison OPEN, Bishops in El Sauce Holy Year Ending.*
25.) JULY 10	*Excessive censoring. Expelling order against 10 Catholic Priest by the Sandinist Government.*
26.) JULY 11	*Excessive censoring. The Pope condemns Expelling, International reaction on the expelling order. The Priest Laplante does no appear.*

NON CIRCULATION AFTER JULY 19, 1984, WHEN CENSORHIP WAS MODIFIED ONLY ON MILITARY MATTERS

27.) AUGUST	*Excessive censoring on Arturo Cruz's political rallies and La Coordinadora in Matagalpa and Chinandega.*
28.) OCTOBER 22	*Excessive censoring relating to PLI political party.*

Letter by Violeta de Chamorro to the People of Nicaragua

To the people of Nicaragua:

With each passing day, freedom of the press is more limited in our country. This prevents us not only from knowing those events that happen every day in our social, political, and economic life, but also from expressing our own opinions, writing our own editorials and commentaries, and presenting and defending the ideals that were the common banner of *La Prensa* and the Nicaraguan people to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship.

The ultimate limit of this lack of freedom was imposed on us with the letter His Holiness Pope John Paul II sent to the Nicaraguan Bishops, which we were forbidden to publish on four consecutive occasions. And when permission to publish the letter was given, the censors tried to impose on us the obligation to head the letter with a communique from the media department of the Ministry of Interior which, besides insulting His Holy Highness, was based on lies.

For that reason, *La Prensa* was not published on Monday the 9th, Wednesday the 11th, and Thursday the 12th of August, as a formal protest and as a demonstration of our decision not to submit ourselves to the arbitrary conditions they wanted to impose on us, conditions that, besides, affected our religious sensibilities.

Such an attitude of *La Prensa* had the effect of setting things right, or so it seemed, and *La Prensa* was published again on August the 13th, in the way our conscience dictated and demanded.

Reflecting on such incidents, I cannot help remembering when on July 19, 1979, I entered my homeland at the head of a new Government of National Reconstruction, accompanied by the good will, the understanding, and support of all the democratic nations of the world. I felt strong and satisfied at having regained the liberty lost during the *Somocista* dictatorship, thinking that the much longed-for freedom of thought, speech, and writing, as well as their indispensable consequence of political pluralism and a mixed economy, would now be achieved.

In this way, I was carrying out the unconquerable yearnings of my husband, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, for which he gave his life. I thanked Christ for this opportunity which was given to me. Nevertheless, scarcely three years later the Sandinista government guided by totalitarian ideologies imported from other countries far from our history and our culture, is trying to maintain the concept that liberty of conscience is divisionism or ideological war.

In this way, what is an unrenounceable and inviolable right, consecrated by all wars of American independence, is made out to be the mere avariciousness and egotism of an exploiting class, without admitting the obvious truth, confirmed a thousand times by history, that without liberty of press there is no representative democracy, nor individual liberty, nor social justice, nor government responsibility, much less widespread justice and equality among citizens; on the contrary, there is darkness, impunity, abuse, mediocrity, and repression. The government, upon suppressing or stifling liberty of the press, thus loses the most efficient means of being objectively informed about errors which many times escape attention because of the bureaucracy and the sectarianism which surround it.

Because of all the preceding, it is incongruous, to put it mildly, that government officials dare to state in international meetings that freedom of the press exists here. There is no reason whatsoever to change the libertarian ideals of the Nicaraguans, taking from them their desire to be truthfully informed through the various communication media, of the diverse and natural tendencies which exist in the country, of what is happening in the everyday social occupation, of their wish to be informed about the many different ideologies which independent intellectuals uphold.

To deny those rights would amount to condemning the Nicaraguan people to be mere passive receptors of a single line of information, denying as a consequence their capability to intelligently choose, that is to say, to be responsibly free.

It has been my fate to live as the wife of a journalist who loved freedom of the press, during the greater part of the 45 years in which we endured the bloodiest dynasty that this hemisphere has had. Many of the current leaders had not yet been born and therefore do not know the brutal methods used by Somoza, the censorship, the jailings, the exiles, the confinements and tortures and how, little by little, the concentration of power, achieved by degree, carried all of us Nicaraguans to inconceivable levels of repression.

But I feel now that I am reliving that horrible nightmare because my husband's love of liberty made me deeply sensitive to all such actions of the government which day by day undermine freedom.

At the beginning, when only freedom of the press is taken away or hindered, it would seem that the only thing lost is the privilege of being informed, the right to complain and protest. But in a short while, owing to the lack of freedom of expression, the public power increases, becomes deformed, and undoes the function of the government, whose legitimate mission is to see to the common good of the citizens without distinction of classes, parties, or religion.

Then begins the second stage, in which the abuses are multiplied, the bloody deeds repeated, the injustices heaped up. The people whimper and whine in silence, gagged, whispering their sorrows, and end by repenting of having let them take away the freedom to protest, while they still had strength and the possibility of exercising it.

Much is the blood that has been spilled, many are the years that have been invested, many the hopes that have been awakened, for us to allow to be taken away so easily the freedom that belongs to us a right, as Pedro stated it on repeated occasions.

Other people in other latitudes fought to conquer each other and knew before hand that the final aim of the war was to make (others) into the slaves and vassals of the victor. But for us, the battle was waged with a deeper consciousness, not of fratricide or of domination, nor to form part of other foreign interests; but the battle was fought for the clearest, most genuine, healthiest, most enduring reasons, and thus it is finally our inalienable right to be forever free.

"Fatherland and freedom"

Violeta Barrios de Chamorro

Statement by Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Barrios

I'll Come Back When There is Freedom of the Press

Writing, reporting and giving my opinions for publication . . . that is my profession. For almost three years I have not been able to exercise this right because a government censor dictates from day to day what can be published and what cannot be published.

I have borne with patience the whimsical dictates of the censor during all these years, but my patience is exhausted.

I feel that our job as an information medium is definitely curtailed by the imagination or the whims and fancies of a censor, who sees in every informative paragraph, in every editorial, or in every opinion expressed by a citizen, an attack against the all-powerful and ever-present "security of the State."

A news item about a 96-year-old lady who committed suicide because she was tired of her existence is looked on as an attack against the psychic health of the people and, therefore, an attack against the security of the State.

The range of news items, international information, editorials and photographs covered by the censorship is simply unbelievable and, at the present time, has reached a monstrous level.

When I wrote my first articles on what was happening in Nicaragua—for publication abroad—I felt that once again I was in control of my pen and my typewriter, which had become numb under almost three years of censorship. Nobody sent me a "resolution" with the three words most often used by the team of censors: CANNOT BE PUBLISHED.

Censorship is not only a flagrant violation of one of the most elemental human rights in a democratic society, it is also the clearest symptom of the difference between a dictatorship and a democracy. There is no dictatorship in the world where freedom of the press exists unfettered, nor a genuine democracy where it is antagonized.

At the same time, Nicaragua's civil, internal opposition has been having as its main political battlefield—paradoxically—the world outside Nicaragua. The "Sandinista" government has become aware of this and—in violation of another fundamental right—has curtailed freedom of travel by opposition leaders out of Nicaragua. It is a well-known fact that inside Nicaragua, it is the mobs of the new Sandinista culture that hold sway, and not visas and passports.

I cannot stand this situation any longer, and unless there is a genuine change in the direction of permitting the right to dissent, and of allowing freedom of the press, both for the daily newspaper *La Prensa* and for the people's communication media, which have been outrageously monopolized by the FSLN party, I will not return to Nicaragua.

In the meantime, I will strive to bring about a substantial change in the present situation, with the principal weapon available to me: my journalist's pen.

As my father said one day, before the Newspapermen's Association of Guatemala, when he received the Freedom of the Press prize given by said Association, I quote:

> "Mankind, through the long and conflicting process of history, has made its way, establishing what is good and destroying what is bad, thus consolidating the concept of freedom of the press and information, as one of the inalienable rights of man.
>
> "What is more, freedom of the press is the basic substratum on which all of the inalienable rights of man are based.
>
> "Without freedom of the press, there is no freedom of conscience.
>
> "Without freedom of the press, there is no freedom of thought.
>
> "Without freedom of the press, even the right to live is jeopardized.
>
> "Without freedom of the press, there is no freedom.
>
> "But freedom per se, and that is the great problem of all time, cannot be a simple juridical fiction, a semantic concept, but must have a specific social conscience and therefore, in order to exist, it calls for an active militancy that will put forth every effort and full awareness, to gain it from day to day."

The files of the press censorship of *La Prensa* are already so voluminous that, even if we had a full year, at the present level of number of pages, *La Prensa* could not publish all of the material that has been censored during the past 3 years.

After so many months of censorship, the Sandinistas perhaps have already grown used to censoring *La Prensa;* but we free journalists will never grow used to being under a regime of censorship.

My father used to say:

> "Whoever takes pleasure in silence and prevents criticism, has something to hide.
>
> "Whoever is happy to live in a system of censorship, is afraid of the truth.
>
> "Who speaks of freedom of speech, while applying an execrable censorship on all of the information media, shows a lack of moral support to govern.
>
> "Whoever prevents freedom of speech by a people does not base his public administration on assent by majorities, but on the violent imposition of his own whims."

No doubt my father wrote this during a given period in the history of Nicaragua: the Somoza period. But his manner of thinking is just as valid in any country where there exists a similar or a worse situation.

The Marxist-Leninist government of Nicaragua has attempted to have elections in order to come into the category of "democratic" countries. But not even during the so-called electoral campaign did it lift press censorship, which gave rise to the *sui generis* situation of "elections under censorship," which is tantamount to "elections under a dictatorship."

I wish to ask the following question of the commanders who are guiding the well-known course of the revolution: If you cannot tolerate on single independent newspaper, how will you be able to tolerate democracy?

San Jose, December 15, 1984

Censorship of *La Prensa:* *A Review of One Week of Prohibited Articles*

The extent of Sandinista control over *La Prensa,* and thereby over information inside Nicaragua in general, is not well known outside the country. About 90 articles were censored by the Sandinistas from the issues of December 28, 1984, to January 4, 1985. Censored items included reports on resistance to the draft, problems of the economy, external relations, human rights abuses, and guerrilla activity, as well as a number of opinion pieces written by members of the civic opposition. On January 2, censor was so heavy that *La Prensa* could not be published at all.

This smothering level of censorship is not uncommon; the following week, for example, the Sandinistas prohibited 75 articles, again preventing *La Prensa* from publishing on January 8, and leading its editors to cancel publication on January 9 in protest.

Major topics censored from *La Prensa* during the week of December 28, 1984–January 4, 1985, included the following:

I. Military Conscription/Draft Resistance (12 reports)

A. Two major stories and five photographs described the December 27 round-up by *turbas* (Sandinista mobs) and soldiers of draft-age youths hiding in the town of Nagarote.

B. Four major articles dealt with the Costa Rican Embassy in Managua providing asylum to army deserter Jose Manuel Urbina, his subsequent shooting and detention by the Sandinistas, and the Embassy's request for Urbina's return, including warnings that the Costa Rican Government was prepared to take the case to the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, and the members of the Contadora Group.

C. Individual articles included:

a story from Ocotal that fifteen drafted youths had escaped/deserted from a training camp, assisted in part by anti-Sandinistas;

a report that the Sandinista Defense Committees thwarted another protest (the third) planned by twelve mothers in Esteli whose sons were drafted;

public appeals by parents to the government: (a) not to draft again an inductee who had already served one year, had been injured, and is needed to support his family; and, (b) to release from service another inductee who is seriously ill;

two reports of mysterious disappearances of nineteen-year-old boys.

II. Economy (19 reports)

A. Five articles reported and criticized the Central Bank's decision to require payment of international air fares in dollars. In the longest article, *buhoneros* (peddlers who import goods to Nicaragua) claimed that a US $1,500 currency limitation for the purchase of merchandise mandated frequent travel and that the extra cost would be added to the final price of the goods. The Buhoneros Union was to meet January 24 to discuss the crisis caused by the dollar travel crisis. Another article declared that the new decree itself violated existing laws which (a) require all transactions within the country to be negotiated in national currency and (b) limit currency leaving the country to $500.00. It added that the cost of tickets alone often exceeds this amount. A short article said that although a stated goal of the decree was to reduce demand, an effect might be to close transport companies. The cotton growers union issued an open letter protesting the change. A short article carried complaints from taxi drivers at the airport about reduced travel.

B. Water shortages: A long article and large photograph described how the frequent suspension of water service had interfered with the industry of extracting starch from yucca. Vendors have appeared selling water—one article stated the price was 30–35 cordobas (28 cordobas = 1 U.S. dollar at the parallel market rate) per barrel. A large photograph showed a vendor with a horse-drawn water barrel.

C. Gasoline shortages: A major article complained about long lines and confusion at gasoline stations. A short article announced Petronic's (the state-owned petroleum organization) proposed 75 percent increase in the price of gasoline.

D. Lengthy testimonials from various sectors demonstrated that economic life was worsening. Major articles included: a 73-year-old master shoemaker walking streets looking for work; tailors who could not find materials; drivers from the national electric company (INE) requesting an increase in their 2,800 cordoba monthly salary; some teachers who were not being paid; housewives confronting spiraling cost of goods in the marketplace. A photograph showed a woman looking through garbage.

E. A short article noted that large-denomination bills were not available in the banks.

F. A short article charged the government commercial agency (DISPER) with failing in its responsibility to control price and supply of goods.

III. External Relations (10 reports)

A. With Colombia—One article said that six Colombians returning from trips to Nicaragua and Cuba had been detained in Medellin when customs agents discovered two mail bags filled with ammunition and a letter supposedly signed by junta coordinator (and now President) Daniel Ortega. Another article stated that custom agents in Medellin had discovered a photocopied letter and ammunition. The letter outlined plans for a Nicaraguan invasion of San Andres Island (under Colombian jurisdiction but claimed by Nicaragua), which the Nicaraguan government, in a joint effort with Colombian guerrillas, intended to destabilize through a revolution in 1986. The same article stated that 1,400 members of the Colombian guerrilla organizations FARC and M-19 are now living in Nicaragua. Yet another article announced that the Nicaraguan government had decided to retire from circulation a 1983 map of Nicaragua that showed San Andres as Nicaraguan territory and that junta member (and now Vice President) Sergio Ramirez had ordered the Nicaraguan Ambassador in Colombia to notify Colombian President Betancur of the decision.

B. With Costa Rica—Four major articles dealt with Urbina asylum case. One article carried news of the

Costa Rican note of protest to Nicaraguan Foreign Minister D'Escoto regarding Defense Minister Humberto Ortega's announcement that U.S. was stationing troops in Costa Rica. A shorter article said that 48 Nicaraguans recently had sought political asylum at the frontier with Costa Rica.

C. One article noted that East Germany had donated to the Nicaraguan government a half million Marxist books, which were received by Education Minister Fernando Cardenal in Corinto.

IV. Human Rights Abuses (9 reports)

A. Major stories included: the Tribunal de Apelaciones (Appeals Court) of Managua had received 700 applications of habeas corpus for arbitrary arrest and detention, the majority of which were brought against the Interior Ministry; a psychiatric patient claiming to be Che Guevara had killed another patient; a released prisoner described psychological torture in the prison "La Chacra" in Esteli.

B. Minor stories included: an assault on a Social Democratic Party member in Rivas; an individual threatened with death for not participating in activities of the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS); relatives looking for person arrested in 1981; a nurse and stretcher bearer arrested because they had refused to allow the military to interrogate a dying child who had been injured by a grenade; a vendor falsely accused of robbery.

C. The Central American Unionist Party (PUCA) requested a general pardon as an effort to obtain national reconciliation.

V. Anti-Sandinista Activity (8 reports)

A. Two stories reported the arrest by state security (DGSE) of Dr. Salomon Calvo Arrieta, correspondent for Radio Impacto (of San Jose, Costa Rica). Nicaraguan journalists in exile in Costa Rica denounced the arrest.

B. Two stories dealt with MISURA leader Steadman Fagoth. One reported that Fagoth had threatened to execute 26 army prisoners if the Sandinistas attempted to rescue them. Fagoth offered to exchange 23 prisoners.

C. One report stated that the last Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) attack of the year in the north killed two civilians and four soldiers; the FDN also purportedly burned a school and attacked a cooperative.

D. One story said that the anti-FSLN groups in the south headed by Eden Pastora accused the Sandinista army of using chemicals against them. In another short article, Pastora announced that the Sandinista military had concentrated troops at the extreme ends of the Rio San Juan for an imminent attack.

E. One story from San Jose said ARDE announced it was forming an international anti-Soviet liberation movement which would include nationalist movements from Angola, Mozambique, and Afghanistan.

VI. Miscellaneous

A. Numerous long editorials/editorial-type articles offered wide-ranging criticisms and predictions for the new year. One reported that Henry Ruiz had criticized poor administration of the government. Among the articles were open letters from the private sector umbrella group COSEP, from Social Christian Party leaders Dr. Julio Ramon Garcia Vilchez and Erick Ramirez, from *La Prensa*'s Jaime Chamorro, and from the Social Democratic Party.

B. Four articles noted random or unexplained shootings or explosions in Ocotal and nearby Madriz on Christmas Eve and a large explosion in Paso Caballos. Random shooting reportedly killed a 23-year-old and injured his brother in Nandaime.

C. Two short articles were on the church. One reported U.S. Archbishop Roach's backing of Nicaraguan bishops. A short article reported on second round of church-state joint commission talks, at which it was declared that each bishop was free to decide whether to attend Ortega's inauguration.

D. One story described a short resolution from a Democratic Conservative Party meeting.

E. One article reported a military truck accident.

F. One article noted that the dispppearance of an engineer who was the head of the Cuban-backed sugar refinery project (TIMAL) coincided with the disappearance of a million cordobas.

G. One cartoon showed an army soldier growing old waiting for an "imminent" invasion.

H. Several "Rionsito" brief political satire pieces were critical of Sandinista government.

La Prensa Statement of December 2, 1985

La Prensa Denounces New Pressures by the Directorate of Media of MINT

La Prensa wishes to denounce before world public opinion, principally to those persons and institutions which have followed closely its long struggle for freedom of expression in Nicaragua, that it is being subjected to, at this time, new pressures and threats, with the clear intention to discourage its editors and to make them live in fear.

From March 1982, as everyone knows, *La Prensa* has been subjected to strict prior censorship on the part of the Directorate of Media of the Interior Ministry. Since then, it has put up with all kinds of excesses and arbitrary acts in the exercise of this censorship which has caused it to cease publication on 35 occasions.

With the installation of the special State of Emergency this past October 15, the Directorate of Media increased its measures against *La Prensa,* imposing more limitations and reaching the point of threatening its board of directors with actions that could land them in jail.

On November 27, in a letter directed to engineer Jaime Chamorro, the Director of Communications Media, Captain Nelba Blandon threatened the newspaper *La Prensa* and its directors with punitive action if they continued to supply copies of censored material to foreign visitors, diplomatic missions and principally to press correspondents, who desire direct and detailed information on the type of censorship that reigns in Nicaragua.

Captain Blandon has reached the extreme of accusing *La Prensa* of circulating outside the country versions of newsworthy happenings in Nicaragua and that have been sent by well-known international news agencies.

In her letter, which threatens to try the directors of *La Prensa,* for example, Captain Blandon accuses *La Prensa* of distribution of the following news:

> "Contra Repulsed in Santo Domingo," item of November 20, 1985, that has the backing of the Associated Press correspondent in Managua, Juan Maltes.
>
> "Naval Engagement in Gulf of Fonseca," item of November 22, 1985, that has the name of correspondent Raul Beltran Bonilla and the support of UPI, from San Salvador.
>
> "Contra Repulsed in Cara De Mono," item of November 25, 1985, that has the backing of the Italian news agency "ANSA," all of them received in *La Prensa* in our teletype machines.

In spite of these stories being public internationally, the Directorate of Media of the Interior Ministry prohibits their publication in Nicaraguan territory and tries to accuse *La Prensa* for the fact that versions of them distributed throughout the world are known outside the country.

La Prensa wishes to denounce before world public opinion these new excesses and arbitrary acts that Captain Blandon commits, trying to suffocate totally the emission of news that, on the other hand, appear well highlighted in the official newspapers in Nicaragua. And, what is worse, Captain Blandon tries to blame *La Prensa* for the fact that such news, which circulates internationally through other channels fully authorized, is known in the world.

All this leads us to the clear conclusion that Captain Blandon tries to bind *La Prensa* to worse limitations than those that have been imposed on it, and to deprive it of its right to make known to the foreign press the material that she censors; this is a right that cannot be denied to a censored publication even in the most difficult of circumstances.

The worst part of this is that Captain Blandon, without any law backing her and without attribution, has arrived at the point of threatening with trial and prison the directors of *La Prensa* on the basis of these invented and exaggerated charges of hers, with orders that go beyond her authority.

Appeal to Injunction

On his part, engineer Jaime Chamorro Cardenal, in his charge as director, resorted today to an injunction before the criminal appellate court of Region No. 3.

The director of *La Prensa* resorted to an injunction on feeling threatened to be deprived of his liberty by the Director of Media, Captain Nelba Cecilia Blandon, who threatened to apply to him the Law of the Maintenance of Order and Public Security.

Roberto Cardenal Chamorro

We Need the Free World's Support

A Nicaraguan editor's plea.

MANAGUA—On Jan. 1 the Sandinista dictatorship closed down Radio Catolica. The newspaper *La Prensa* is now the last independent news outlet left in Nicaragua, although it is heavily censored by the regime.

The murder of a journalist, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, editor of La Prensa, sparked the anti-Somoza insurrection. Freedom of the press was one of the banners of the struggle. On the day the new government took power, July 20, 1979, it repealed the Somoza radio and television law and granted freedom of information.

Nevertheless, the history of freedom of the press under the Sandinista dictatorship has gone the opposite way.

Soon after victory the party (FSLN) started building up its own propaganda machinery, taking for its own use as spoils of war 16 radio stations, the only two television channels and the newspaper *Novedades* (now known as *Barricada*).

In April 1980, the Sandinistas tried, but failed, to shut down *La Prensa.* In 1980 they also suspended a radio program directed by Oscar Leonardo Montalvan and imprisoned for six months another independent newsman, Guillermo Treminio.

In September of that year, they issued decrees 511 and 512 embargoing news of the security of the state and forbidding news of food shortages, scarcities and matters relating to the police.

Soon a chain of decrees was issued banning the written or oral spreading of commentaries questioning the impartiality and authority of the judicial branch and favoring delinquent behavior. Also prohibited was unauthorized publication of any facts implicating a policeman or soldier.

As may be noted, all these things took place *before* the existence of the contra "counterrevolution."

From July to October 1981, *La Prensa* was shut down five times for periods of two or three days for infringing these decrees. When we published an interview of an entrepreneur whose business had been confiscated, we were accused of praising delinquent behavior, and were closed.

In the same year Sandinista mobs destroyed Radio Mi Preferida and Radio Amor; the owner of the two radio stations was assaulted. Mobs partially destroyed the independent radios Corporacion and Mundial and beat the owner of the first and his wife.

In March 1982, the Sandinista dictatorship imposed a state of emergency and required all media to submit all material prior to publication. At the same time 22 independent radio news programs were shut down for good.

Through the method of censorship similar to the one used by Somoza, *La Prensa* has suffered an average delay of publication of about five hours every day, and has found 47 percent of the submitted material censored. Because of censorship, *La Prensa* has not published at all on 33 occasions.

For three months before the visit of the pope, it was forbidden to mention his name or his planned visit. When Leonid Brezhnev's obituary was published, all his bad traits were suppressed.

All our complaints of censorship and our explanations to readers are censored. On Jan. 14, 1986, an editorial welcoming the Spanish foreign minister and another congratulating Guatemalans for reinstating democracy were censored.

The Sandinistas used to say that the censorship is due to the war, but only a minimal part of the material stopped has to do with the civil war.

Since 1982 four of our reporters and one photographer have been jailed and senior editor Horacio Ruiz kidnapped. Five newsmen including co-director Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Jr. and editorial page editor Humberto Belli live now in exile because of governmental pressures.

Last October on *Radio Catolica,* the Gospel itself was censored: Luke 19:41, when Christ cries over Jerusalem, and Matthew 5:10, when Christ blesses those who suffer persecution.

On Oct. 12, 1985, the newspaper of the Catholic Church, *Iglesia,* was confiscated and its facilities occupied by the secret police. On Jan. 1, 1986, *Radio Catolica* was closed for good for its delay in transmitting President Daniel Ortega's New Year's speech, leaving the church unable to preach the Gospel.

With its closing, a sword of Damocles hangs over our heads. Only the public opinion of the Western world can save us. For this reason, the international propaganda machinery of the Sandinistas aims to present us as traitors to the motherland who have sold out to Ronald Reagan and as unprofessional journalists who are despised by the Nicaraguan people. Solidarity with the free world is the oxygen necessary for our continued existence.

The writer is an editor of La Prensa.

Annex 7

The Situation of the Catholic Church

The Sandinistas have repeatedly taken actions to harass, intimidate, and divide religious groups in Nicaragua, particularly the Catholic Church. The Church has repeatedly spoken out against Sandinista violations of human rights and called for peace, freedom, and social justice. This position has placed it in direct confrontation with the FSLN.

The first document is an excerpt from a Pastoral Letter issued in November 1979, in which the Catholic bishops defined their position regarding the revolution and its aims.

The second document is a communique by the Catholic bishops issued in February 1982, protesting the gross mistreatment of Miskito Indians during the Sandinistas' campaign to forcibly resettle some 10,000 residents of the Atlantic coast region in special camps.

The third document is a Pastoral Letter of September 1983 concerning the Sandinista program of compulsory military service.

The fourth document is a Pastoral Letter issued on Easter Sunday, April 22, 1984, calling for national reconciliation.

The fifth document is a CPDH report on the FSLN's virulent response to the Easter Pastoral Letter in which the Sandinistas bitterly denounced this appeal for peace and launched a vicious personal attack on the bishops.

The sixth and seventh documents are Church letters protesting the occupation of *Radio Catolica* in September 1985.

The eighth document is a translation of several articles in the Church newsletter *Iglesia*. To prevent the circulation of this newsletter, the Sandinistas seized all available copies and confiscated the printing plates and printing press from which it was made.

The ninth document is a Church statement on the expanded State of Emergency.

The tenth document is a Curia release concerning the recent attacks by the Sandinistas, including the seizure of the Archdiocesan Commission for Social Advancement (COPROSA), the Curia's social services agency, in Managua on October 15, 1985.

The eleventh document is a letter by Pope John Paul II on December 1, 1985, expressing his concern over the persecution of the Church and his solidarity with the bishops of Nicaragua.

The twelfth document is a statement by the bishops of Central America supporting the Catholic Church in Nicaragua.

The thirteenth document is a letter on the situation of the Church in Nicaragua presented by Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo to United Nations Secretary General Dr. Javier Perez de Cuellar during the Cardinal's visit to New York in late January 1986.

The final document is a July 7, 1986, letter from the Nicaraguan Bishops to Bishops' Conferences around the world describing Sandinista persecution of the Church, particularly the banishment of Bishop Pablo Antonio Vega and Monsignor Bismarck Carballo.

Pastoral Letter of the Nicaraguan Catholic Bishops*

Socialism

We hear expressed, at times with anguish, the fear that the present Nicaraguan process is moving toward socialism. The Bishops are asked what we think about this.

If, as some think, socialism weakens people, usurping their character as the free protagonists of their history; if it tries to submit people blindly to the manipulations and dictates of those who arbitrarily seize power, such serious or false socialism we could not accept. Neither could we accept a socialism which, overstepping its limits, tried to deny men the right to their religious beliefs or the right to express publicly their beliefs and convictions whatever their religious faith might be.

Equally unacceptable would be a socialism that denied parents the right to educate their children according to their convictions, or which denied any other human right.

If, on the other hand, socialism means—as it ought to mean—the preeminence of the interests of the majority of Nicaraguans and a model of a nationally planned economy, solidly and increasingly participant, we have nothing against it. A social project that guarantees the common use of the goods and resources of the country and permits—on the basis of the satisfaction of the fundamental necessities of everyone—the improvement of the human quality of life—seems just to us. If socialism implies a reduction of the injustices and the traditional inequalities between city and countryside, between pay for intellectual and manual work, if it signifies the participation of the worker in the fruits of his labor, the overcoming of economic alienation, there is nothing in Christianity that is in contradiction to this process. In fact, Pope John Paul II has recently emphasized in the United Nations his concern with the dramatic separation between work and property. If socialism means power exercised from the point of view of the vast majority, and increasingly shared by an organized people—in the sense that there is movement toward a true transfer of power to the popular classes—again it will encounter nothing but support and approval from our faith.

Regarding class struggle, we think that the dynamic aspect of class struggle that leads to a just structural transformation is one thing, and class hatred directed against persons is quite another—one that radically contradicts the Christian obligation to be guided by love.

Our faith tells us that it is an urgent Christian duty to live in this world, to transform the land and all the other resources of production in order to permit man to live and to make of Nicaragua a land of justice, solidarity, peace and liberty in which the Christian vision of the kingdom of God acquires its full meaning.

Furthermore, we are confident that the revolutionary process will be original, creative, profoundly national, and in no way imitative. Because, with the majority of Nicaraguans, what we want is a process that advances firmly toward a society that is fully and authentically Nicaraguan, not capitalist, not dependent, not totalitarian.

The Pastoral Letter, dated November 17, 1979, is subtitled "Christian Commitment to a New Nicaragua," ("Compromiso Cristiano para una Nicaragua Nueva"*). This translation is the final section of Part One, about one-fifth of the total Letter.

Communique by the Nicaraguan Catholic Bishops' Conference on Sandinista Mistreatment of Miskito Indians

The events that have occurred in the zone of the Rio Coco, on the frontier with Honduras, in the Department of Zelaya, Nicaragua, since December 1981, and that have culminated, in part, with the massive transfer of the entire Miskito population toward the interior of the national territory and, on the other hand, with the flight of a considerable number of the population of this zone into Honduran territory, have had a painful effect on all the inhabitants—Miskitos, Sumos, and Ladinos of the area.

It is well known that armed encounters occurred in these months and that in this zone these encounters resulted in the deaths of many militiamen and soldiers of the Sandinista People's Army, as well as the deaths of many of its political adversaries, and also the deaths of some uninvolved civilians. As a result of these events there are dozens of detainees and almost all of the towns along the Rio Coco have been evacuated by the army. While it is possible to explain in military terms the evacuation of these towns, nevertheless, we regret, from a human and Christian point of view, the displacement of these Indian groups that have been located in this region since time immemorial. Such displacements include the removal of the population to settlements in the interior of the republic, as well as displacements into Honduran territory where many have fled, driven perhaps by fear or by the manner, at times drastic, with which earlier ones were transferred to the settlements in Nicaragua. As pastors for all our people we feel profoundly the sorrow provoked by the uprooting from their regions of all our brothers and we wish to send them expressions of our sorrow, our worry, our paternal love, and our pastoral concern.

Our thoughts on these events:

We recognize the governing authorities' right to undertake necessary measures to guarantee the defense and the integrity of the territory of the nation. We also recognize the autonomy of the state and its right to determine the implementation of emergency military measures in all or part of the national territory in order to defend the country.

Nevertheless, we wish to remind everyone that there are inalienable rights that under no circumstances can be violated and we must state, with painful surprise, that in certain concrete cases there have been grave violations of the human rights of individuals, families, and entire populations of peoples. They include:

- relocations of individuals by military operations without warning and without conscientious dialogue;
- forced marches, carried out without sufficient consideration for the weak, aged, women, and children;
- charges or accusations of collaboration with the counterrevolution against all residents of certain towns;
- the destruction of houses, belongings, and domestic animals;
- the deaths of individuals in circumstances that, to our great sorrow, remind us of the drama of other peoples of the region.

Such are the facts that compel us to denounce vigorously such attitudes of those who have the power and force because they must be the first to guarantee observance of these human rights. And we urge competent authorities to take the necessary disciplinary measures to prevent a repetition of such events in the future.

On the other hand, we must remember that it is good to maintain the national integrity and that it is a right and historical duty of all Nicaragua to protect the nation's territorial integrity. We must also remember that it is a right and duty to preserve the legitimate possession and use of the riches of the natural, traditional, and cultural patrimony of the indigenous people of the Atlantic Coast. In these, we encounter and recognize with pride, not only the ancestry of our race, but also the identity of our ancient, prehispanic nationalities.

Final Observations:

After having expounded briefly these facts that denote a situation of disrespect to the dignity of the human person and the violation of their rights, we, as pastors, in open solidarity with the Miskitos, Sumos, and Ladinos of our Atlantic coast request of the competent authorities an objective investigation and adequate measures to promote peace and tranquility through the increase of justice in the region.

To you brothers, Miskitos, Sumos, and Ladinos, who with such love and work during so many years have been evangelized, we encourage you in the valiant effort to conserve, cultivate, and defend your Christian faith and subsequent hope. For our part, as Catholic bishops, we will do all possible in order that the task of evangelization is not halted, assuring you periodic visits of your bishop and of your priests, of your deacons and your nuns and religious workers. This Bishops' Conference, in common with our brothers in the Atlantic Coast, asks of faithful Catholics their prayers and generous collaboration in the collection that will take place in all churches of the country in all the Masses celebrated on Sunday, March 2, the 2nd Sunday of Lent. Upon decreeing this day of prayer and collaboration in benefit of our brothers of the Atlantic coast, we are conscious that in making this denouncement we are not ignoring the efforts of the government to attend those harmed in the region. Our institution, Caritas Nicaragua, ought to collaborate in accordance with the wishes of the Bishops' Conference. We ask that non-ecclesiastical institutions and organizations help our brothers on the Atlantic coast. We ask the government that it offer them facilities to provide this service directly to the needy.

Finally, given the impossibility of being able to directly help those that for the same reasons are in Honduran territory, we appeal to the charity of our brothers of the Bishops' Conference of Honduras and the fraternal generosity of their ecclesiastical institutions.

Under the maternal protection of Mary Immaculate in whose heart is concentrated our country, we make public this message in Granada, February 18, 1982.

General Considerations of the Bishops' Conference of Nicaragua Concerning Military Service

The Bill on military service currently being debated in the Council of State has caused some unease and concern for a large part of the Nicaraguan people.

In view of this situation, the Bishops' Conference cannot remain silent, because Catholics expect moral guidance and a standard of conduct to which to adhere.

Accordingly, the bishops, after mature reflection, are offering these brief ideas to Catholics and all Nicaraguans of good will.

General Considerations Concerning Military Service

The army is an armed institution of the State which is legitimized by the need to defend the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State against potential foreign attacks or domestic disturbances.

In this regard, the Vatican II Council makes a specific reference to the army, whose purpose is "the service of the nation" and whose function is to be "the instrument of the security and freedom of the people" (Cfr. GS. 79).

However, the legitimacy of the existence of the army, as the armed authority of the State, would be pointless if the State lacked genuine moral authority to oblige its citizens, within the limits established by law, to enlist in the armed forces and render military service to the nation.

Consequently, it must be admitted that mandatory military recruitment is a legitimate power of the State and is not in conflict, in principle, with any ethical or moral standard.

Notwithstanding, the State must respect the legitimate freedom of the individual and take into account the religious or ethical beliefs of its citizens.

Accordingly, the Vatican II Council, echoing an almost universal feeling, has stated that "it seems reasonable for the laws to take into account, with human feeling, the case of those who refuse to bear arms for reasons of conscience while consenting to serve the community in another manner" (CFr. GS.79).

However, a "revolutionary concept" has appeared alongside this "classical concept" of the army and military service based on a new interpretation of the law, the State, and its institutions.

These totalitarian ideologies have created a new type of law, based on more radical juridical positivism and the preeminence of society over the individual. In this new order of law, personal and individual values are subordinated to social and collective values at the discretion of the State.

This revolutionary socio-juridical concept has not been legitimized in practice by free acceptance by the people but has been imposed, in fact, by force of arms and other manifestations of the coercive power of the State.

It can easily be seen that in all countries with totalitarian governments a highly politicized army has been created in defense of their own ideology and, at the same time, to force the people to undergo political indoctrination.

The fundamental error in this juridical-political system is that it identifies the State with the Party and the Party with the people or with their interests.

This absolute dictatorship of a political party, which is established by force under the control and at the sole discretion of the State, its institutions, and any type of social activity, raises the problem of its very legitimacy, together with the legitimacy of its institutions, including the army (CFr. Article 21 (3) of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

If the "armed authority," which should be vested exclusively in the State, becomes an "armed authority" in the service of a political party, the very possibility of a democratic and pluralistic organization of the State and the various social forces is automatically negated.

To force citizens to enlist in a "political-party army" when they are not in agreement with the ideology of that political party is an attack on freedom of thought, opinion, and association (CFr. Articles 18, 19, and 20 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

Consequently, no one can be forced to bear arms to defend an ideology with which he is not in agreement or to render obligatory military service for the benefit of a political party.

Bill on Patriotic Military Service

The first Proclamation of the Government of National Reconstruction of June 18, 1979, affirms that "the organization of a Nationalistic Army that incorporates the interests of the Nicaraguan people and defends our integrity and national sovereignty is hereby proposed."

The Government Program presented in this same Proclamation laid the bases for organizing a new national army.

This Program affirms that "a new National Army shall be organized, and its basic principles shall be the defense of the democratic process and the sovereignty and independence of the Nation, together with the integrity of its territory" (Article 1(12)).

In accordance with these principles, *Comandante* Daniel Ortega, coordinator of the Junta of Government, stated in a speech given on July 19, 1983: "The National Directorate of the FSLN, supported by the Junta of Government, have decided to submit the Bill establishing Patriotic Military Service as soon as possible for approval" (*Barricada*, July 20, 1983, page 3, column 4).

The full text of this bill was published in various Nicaraguan newspapers on August 10, 1983.

This bill is highly politicized in its fundamental points, is partisan in nature, and is generally consistent with all totalitarian legislation.

Patriotic Military Service is defined as "active participation by all the people in defense activities and, accordingly, entails an obligation for all Nicaraguans to bear arms in the defense of the nation and the Sandinista People's Revolution" (Article 2).

It is incorrect to mix, confuse, or identify the concepts of nation, State, revolution, and *Sandinismo*, for each of these words has a separate specific content and a very different juridical-political connotation.

Moreover, the initial legitimate, social, and popular revolutionary movement has been converted into a political party.

Military Service claims not only "to provide training in the latest military technical advances" (Consideration VII) but also "to foster the sense of discipline and revolutionary morale in our youth" (Consideration VII). That means that the army is being converted into an obligatory political indoctrination center for the Sandinista party.

Using military discipline to "manipulate" people ideologically and to force a specific ideology upon them is a serious attack on freedom of thought and opinion.

These principles and the grounds listed in Article 4(2)(4)(5) distort and contradict the true meaning of the first Proclamation of the Government and the Program presented at that time.

For all these reasons, all those who do not share the ideology of the Sandinista party may take the attitude of "conscientious objection" toward this law. No one may be punished, persecuted, or discriminated against for electing this solution.

By proposing these reflections for the consideration of Catholics, we seek only to shed ethical and moral light upon this problem and to exhort everyone to seek a peaceful way of resolving the serious problems facing our society.

True peace comes from justice, not violence.

May the Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace, help us to live in charity so that this Holy Year of Reconciliation may produce sincere fruits of justice, love, and peace in each of us and in our society.

Managua, August 29, 1983.
Bishops' Conference of Nicaragua.

Attest:

Leovigildo Lopez Fitoria
Bishop of Granada
Secretary of the Bishops'
Conference of Nicaragua

Pastoral Letter of the Nicaraguan Catholic Bishops
April 22, 1984

To the Priests and Deacons in our Dioceses:
To Members of Religious Orders:
To Catechists and Bearers of the Word:
To Our Brothers and Sisters in the apostolic lay movements:
To principals, teachers, and students in Catholic schools:
To all our beloved faithful:

Grace and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

At this solemn Easter celebration, the ultimate expression of God's love for mankind through the redemption, we invite you to share more fully in the spiritual wealth of the holy year, which will be extended in Nicaragua by a special concession from Pope John Paul II until June 17, 1984, the feast of the Holy Trinity.

This extension and the urgent need in our society for sincere and brotherly reconcilation through individual conversion have moved us to send you this exhortation.

I. Doctrinal Section

1. Sin, the Root of All Evil:

When sin came into the world, all things were changed profoundly; the soil yielded brambles; civilizations and institutions passed away; man himself rebelled against his fellow men, and the empire of tyranny and death began (CF. Gen. 3:16–19; 4:7–8).

Man, created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26) did not wish to acknowledge or glorify him; man became vain in his imagination, and his foolish heart was darkened (Rom. 1:21). There were also those who, like Satan, disguised themselves as angels of light to deceive others and lead them to perdition (CF. II Corinthians 11:14–15). A poorly understood anthropocentricity plunged mankind into the heavy bondage of sin.

2. Redemption of Christ:

Christ, by his death and resurrection, has reconciled us to God, to ourselves, and to our brothers and sisters, has freed us from the bondage of sin (CF. Col. 1:20–22, Cor. 5:18), and has given his church the mission of transmitting his message, pardon, and grace (CF. MT. 28:18–20, MK. 15–20).

All this should be for us a call to conversion; it should be the beginning of a radical change in spirit, mind, and life (CF. John Paul II, Papal Bull., "Open the Doors to the Redeemer," No. 5).

There are three aspects to this conversion, which redeems our individual and collective lives:

(a) We must avoid personal sin, any act that disrupts our baptismal alliance with God.

(b) We must banish any sinful attitudes from our hearts, that is, any habitual rejection, whether conscious or unconscious, of Christian standards and moral values.

(c) We must put an end to such sins of society as participation in injustice and violence.

3. Sin after the Redemption:

Nonetheless, sin has persisted in the world since our redemption by Christ, because:

(a) Man abuses his freedom and does not accept God's grace.

(b) Society has become secularized and is no longer oriented toward God; it does not heed the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation, but considers it an alienating institution.

(c) At times it claims to accept Christ and his teachings, but it repudiates the Church and thereby falls into the temptation of establishing other "Churches" than the one founded by the apostles and their successors, the legitimate bishops.

(d) We forget that coexistence can only be based on an accurate perception of the individual as an intelligent, free, and religious human being, with rights and duties devolving from his very nature (CF. John XXIII, *Encyclical Pacem in Terris,* No. 9–10).

(e) Materialistic concepts of mankind distort the person and teachings of Christ, reduce man to merely physical terms without taking account of his spiritual nature, so he remains subject to physical forces called the "dialectics of history." And man, alienated from God and from himself, becomes disoriented, without moral and religious reference points, without a higher nature, insecure and violent.

II. Our Situation

1. The Problem of Sin in the World:

Pope John Paul II, in his message for the 17th World Day of Prayer for Peace on January 1, 1984, expressed his concern about the current world situation, a concern which we, too, share: "Peace is truly precarious, and injustice abounds. Relentless warfare is occurring in many countries, continuing on and on despite the proliferation of deaths, mourning, and destruction, without any apparent progress toward a solution. It is often the innocent who suffer, while passioins become inflamed and there is the risk that fear will lead to an extreme situation."

2. In Nicaragua:

a. Belligerent Situation:

Our country, too, is plagued by a belligerent situation pitting Nicaraguan against Nicaraguan, and the consequences of this situation could not be sadder:

— Many Nicaraguan youths and men are dying on the battlefields.

— Many others look toward the future with the fear of seeing their own lives prematurely ended.

— A materialistic and atheistic educational system is undermining the consciences of our children.

— Many families are divided by political differences.

— The suffering of mothers who have lost their children, which should merit our great respect, is instead exploited to incite hatred and feed the desire for vengeance.

— Peasants and Indians, for whom the Church reserves a special love, are suffering, living in constant anxiety, and many of them are forced to abandon their homes in search of a peace and tranquillity that they do not find.

— Some of the mass media, using the language of hate, encourage a spirit of violence.

b. The Church:

One, albeit small, sector of our Church has abandoned ecclesiastical unity and surrendered to the tenets of a materialistic ideology. This sector sows confusion inside and outside Nicaragua through a campaign extolling its open ideas and defaming the legitimate pastors and the faithful who follow them. Censorship of the media makes it impossible to clarify the positions and offer other points of view.

3. Foreign Interference:

Foreign powers take advantage of our situation to encourage economic and ideological exploitation. They see us as support for their power, without respect for our persons, our history, our culture, and our right to decide our own destiny.

Consequently, the majority of the Nicaraguan people live in fear of their present and uncertainty of their future. They feel deep frustration, clamor for peace and freedom. Yet their voices are not heard, muted by belligerent propaganda on all sides.

4. The Root of These Evils:

This situation is rooted in the sin of each and every one, in injustice and oppression, in exploitative greed, in political ambition and abuse of power, in disregard for moral and religious values, in lack of respect for human dignity, in forgetting, abandoning, and denying God.

III. Response of the Church

1. Conversion and Reconciliation:

The Church ardently desires and encourages peace and tranquility and believes that there is only one path to that end, conversion. This means that we must all turn our eyes and heart to God, our Father, who through Christ offers us the true path to reconciliation, forgiveness, and peace.

> "It is not behavior alone that needs to be changed, but the heart that guides our lives. At the community level it is important to examine ourselves as persons, as groups and social units, not only as victims but also as authors of certain collective deviations from God's plan, in order to implement together God's plan for constructive human endeavor." (CF. Peace and Conversion, a Pontifical document issued by the Commission on Justice and Peace at Rome on September 30, 1983.)

The entire universe is the object of redemption since it also reveals the glory of God and must be sanctified and consecrated to God (CF. Vatican II, Const. Lumen Gentium, No. 34). Christ resurrected is at the center of history and of the world, leading us toward its full maturity and its final liberation from all the forces of evil (CF. Vatican II, Const. Lumen Gentium, No. 48).

2. Confession: The Path to Conversion:

John Paul II in his address on reform and holiness given at Rome on November 26, 1983, said: "To assist such conversion, the Lord instituted the sacrament of reconciliation. In it Christ himself goes to meet the man oppressed by the awareness of his own weakness, he raises him and gives him the necessary strength to continue his path. With the sacrament the life of the resurrected Christ enters the spirit of the believer, bringing forth renewed generosity of purpose and an enhanced capacity to live by the gospel."

Jesus reconciled all things, bringing peace through the cross (Col:20) and transmitted this power to his disciples (CF. JN 4:21, 13:34–35, 12–17).

Preparing to receive the benefits of the sacrament of confession is an important step in conversion. A sincere examination of our sins, self-criticism of our attitudes and our life, these reveal to us our faults and make us abhor sin which is an offense against God, an affront to the Church, and damage or injury to our neighbor. It encourages us to turn totally to God and to reform our lives, it brings us back to the Church and closer to our brothers.

3. Dialogue:

The road to social peace is possible through dialogue. Sincere dialogue that seeks truth and goodness. "That must be a meaningful and generous offer of a meeting of good intentions and not a possible justification for continuing to foment dissension and violence." (John Paul II, Greeting to Nicaragua, March 4, 1983.)

It is dishonest to constantly blame internal aggression and violence on foreign aggression.

It is useless to blame the evil past for everything without recognizing the problems of the present.

All Nicaraguans inside and outside the country must participate in this dialogue, regardless of ideology, class or partisan belief. Furthermore, we think that Nicaraguans who have taken up arms against the government must also participate in this dialogue. If not, there will be no possibility of a settlement, and our people, especially the poorest among them, will continue to suffer and die.

The dialogue of which we speak is not a tactical truce to strengthen positions for further struggle but a sincere effort to seek appropriate solutions to the anguish, pain, exhaustion, and fatigue of the many, many people who long for peace, the many, many people who want to live, to rise from the ashes, to see the warmth of a smile on a child's face, far from terror, in a climate of democratic harmony.

The terrible chain of reactions inherent in friend-enemy dialectics is halted by the word of God, who demands that we love even our enemies and that we forgive them. He urges us to move from distrust and aggressiveness to respect and harmony, in a climate conducive to true and objective deliberation on our problems and a prudent search for solutions. The solution is reconciliation (CF. John Paul II, Peace and Reconciliation. Address by the Pope in El Salvador, March 6, 1983).

If we are not open to objective acknowledgment of our situation and the events that distress our people ideologically, politically, and militarily, then we are not prepared, in a true and Christian way, for reconciliation for the sake of the real, living wholeness of our nation.

Considering that freedom of speech is a vital part of the dignity of a human being, and as such is indispensable to the well-being of the nation inasmuch as a country progresses only when there is freedom to generate new ideas, the right to free expression of one's ideas must be recognized.

The great powers, which are involved in this problem for ideological or economic reasons, must leave the Nicaraguans free from coercion.

Conclusion:

If we want our conversion to find true expression in the life of our national community, we must strive to lead lives worthy of the Gospel (CF. PH 1:27, EP 4:1), reject all lies, all harmful or offensive words, all anger and evil utterance, and be benevolent and forgive generously as God forgave us through Christ (CF. EP 4:25-32, Col 3:12-14).

It behooves us to value each life as a gift of God, help the young to find meaning and value in their lives and prepare themselves for their future roles in society, forgive enemies and adversaries, facilitate the return of those who have left their country and welcome them with an open heart, free those imprisoned for ideological differences, create a climate of friendship and peace conducive to social harmony.

"In the great task of bringing peace and reconciliation to the nation, the family as the basic unit of society cannot be ignored. Nor can respect for its rights." (CF. Gaudium et Spes N.52, Quoted by John Paul II in his address to the bishops of El Salvador, February 24, 1984.)

May the Holy Virgin, who played her part in our redemption with such exemplary fortitude, provide us with the necessary strength to perform our Christian duty of love and peace.

And may the Lord of peace grant us all, always and in all our endeavors, the peace and tranquility we seek (CF., 2 TH 3:16).

Done at Managua, April 22, Easter Sunday, 1984 (to be read and published in the usual manner), Bishops' Conference of Nicaragua.

The Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua (CPDH)

Report On

The Persecution of the Nicaraguan Church Continues

At Easter, all the Catholic bishops of Nicaragua published a Pastoral Letter in which they extorted the people to become reconciled with God and with all their brothers. Specifically they proposed the Sacrament of Confession and an honest dialogue involving all parties in search of peace.

The Permanent Commission on Human Rights has stated on various occasions that it urges such an all-embracing dialogue in order to solve the basic problem shared by Nicaraguans—a problem that results in many human rights violations—and has observed with hope that the various factions (who are opposed to the FSLN's ideological political system), including those bearing arms, have expressed their willingness to participate in this dialogue. The Commission has also observed with equal hope that such an all-embracing dialogue has been included among the steps to peace that were proposed by the Contadora Group.

Yet the call by the country's bishops for reconciliation and dialogue has elicited an extraordinarily virulent reaction from the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. We say extraordinary because it stands apart from the already customary undertone of continuous threats and insults to the Church. It stands apart in the way that the reception FSLN gave to His Holiness John Paul II stood apart internationally.

While virtually all expressions of support for and loyalty to the bishops are censored, the media (the press, radio, and television) in the service of the Sandinista National Liberation Front erupted like volcanos of hatred against the bishops: speeches, statements, analyses, photographs, sketches, cartoons . . . for days and days. The common denominator of all these attacks, that is, the message communicated in various ways through various instruments, was to challenge the authority of the bishops by saying that their letter was not pastoral but political, and that it had been drafted by the CIA, adding that the only possible dialogue with "enemies" was "through the mouths of machine guns."

They used all their resources in this extraordinarily virulent reaction, including human resources within the organization of the Church. These are particularly effective in attacking the Church. The Jesuits, in a letter published in newspapers serving the Sandinista Front and signed by "the Provincial Delegate and his Counsel," raised their voices in a prolonged chorus of attacks against the Pastoral Letter. After the Jesuit document came the Dominican one. Both publications were designed to appear as if the documents represented the institutional views of the Jesuit Fathers and the Dominican Fathers. The Permanent Commission on Human Rights is aware, however, that this position is not shared by all Jesuits and Dominicans. For example, the Commission is aware that it aroused sorrow and indignation in many priests and friars of the Society of Jesus. But they are those who have no voice, like the majority of Nicaraguans. They do not have subsidiary information offices, such as that of the Central American Historical Institute* at Georgetown University in Washington. They do not have access to the media. They can be expelled from the country if they say what they think, as has happened with members of other congregations. They can be victimized by calumny, slowly prepared with photographs and soundtracks, as is currently happening to Amado Pena, a Nicaraguan priest from the Pius X Parish in Managua, who is loyal to his bishops.

On Monday, June 18, the Ministry of Interior announced a press conference for 9 a.m. on the following day, supposedly to describe how the State Security forces had dismantled an internal counterrevolutionary front. On Tuesday, June 19, without any explanation this press conference was postponed until the following day. At the conference on Wednesday, June 20, *Comandante* Lenin Cerna, chief of State Security, presented an individual who allegedly had been taken prisoner two or three days earlier (he was free on Sunday, June 17, according to the Ministry of Interior), and this prisoner publicly confessed that he was the leader of an internal counterrevolutionary front and implicated several people in the democratic sectors of the country, the Nicaraguan Workers Central (CTN), the organization of professionals (CONAPRO), *Radio Corporacion*, and the Democratic Conservation Party. Nevertheless, among the sectors involved clearly stood apart the Catholic Church because of alleged activities in the parish councils and mainly the priest Luis Amado Pena.

The press conference was followed by a television presentation of a black-and-white film in which the prisoner who had just made a public statement was shown with other persons talking with Father Pena. First he was shown in what appeared to be the living room of a house, and they succeeded in picking up words and phrases indicating that they were discussing conspiratorial activities. Next the prisoner was shown with the priest (back turned) and other persons, in another room, and the appearance and words of the prisoner (which were always much clearer than those of the priest) indicated that they were showing him weapons and explaining how to handle them.

The press conference ended by pointing out that Father Pena was not arrested because the Sandinista Government is favorably disposed toward the Church. Notwithstanding, it should be added, the entire press conference and reruns on television emphasized the following message: both the prisoner's statements and graphic "proof" indicated that Church members were talking about reconciliation in the Pastoral Letter but were actually preparing for war and killing.

Comandante Tomas Borge attempted to convince the bishops and Papal Nunciature that they should keep Father Pena at the Nunciature. The ecclesiastical authorities turned down the suggestion, believing that the accused was innocent, and allowed him to return to his parish if he chose. He did indeed return to his parish, and the faithful welcomed him with joy. But when he was preparing to celebrate High Mass on the feast of Corpus Christi on Thursday, June 21, the *turba* [mob] from the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) surrounded the church and choked the parishioners with the smoke of tires burned in the street and on the roof of the church so that the smoke penetrated the church and prevented the Eucharist from being celebrated. When the parishioners left the church, they were beaten. Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo of Managua, concerned about his priest's safety, asked him to sleep at the Seminary that night. Then *Comandante* Tomas Borge decided to imprison the priest in the Seminary, because "although the Revolution pardoned him," he would be judged guilty or innocent by the People's Tribunals. Father Pena is still a prisoner in the Seminary, and a police patrol at the entrance questions everyone who enters and checks outgoing vehicles.

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*The Central American Historical Institute is run by the Jesuit Fathers and operates within the Central American University. Under its current administration it has become one of the most important centers for formulating and disseminating the ideas of the Popular Church.

The Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua has received testimony signed by Father Luis Amado Pena himself in which he denies participating in the incident and plans of which he is accused. The priest believes that he remembers the room in the first scene of the movie as the living room of a house he was invited to bless, where there was a small party following the blessing, but what confuses him is that at the time there were many people other than those shown in the film. The CPDH is also aware that the ecclesiastical authorities are totally supportive of Father Pena and say that he has always been dedicated to his pastoral activities.

This type of attack against the Church is not new. For one thing, it has become normal—as the Bishops' Conference stated publicly when it learned of the new attack—for the government to furnish information and make accusations that are unfounded. There was the well-known case of Father Bismarck Carballo. There were the cases of Monsignor Salvador Shlaefer, whose kidnapping and murder were officially reported; Monsignor Pablo Antonio Vega, who was accused of transporting weapons, an accusation which was picked up and published by *Pax Christi* in Rome; and Bishop Miguel Obando y Bravo, who was recently said to be visiting President Reagan in Washington when he was actually visiting the Pope in Rome.

For another thing, it has also become normal in Nicaragua for prisoners to appear on television accusing themselves of counterrevolutionary activities and implicating other persons in democratic sectors. For example, we recall the recent case of the journalist Luis Mora who implicated his colleague Jorge Ortega. As a result of this prisoner's statement, the reporter Ortega was also arrested and is being tried by the People's Tribunals.

In addition to all this, the records of the Permanent Commission on Human Rights (CPDH) contain a report (No. 83-3-037) submitted by Carlos Huembes, Secretary General of the Nicaraguan Workers Central (CTN) on March 17, 1983, stating that two individuals who looked like campesinos and were known as HERNAN ESPINOZA and BENJAMIN CUADRA or BENJAMIN FLETES recently went to the CTN offices to deliver a "package" sent by Mariano Mendoza. Mr. Mendoza had been pointed out repeatedly by the government as a member of the counterrevolution. Mr. Carlos Huembes did not wish to receive them for this reason and in his report held the Ministry of Interior responsible for this maneuver. It turned out that one of these individuals, HERNAN ESPINOZA, appeared at the press conference accusing himself of being the leader of a domestic front, and he is the leading actor in the film implicating Father Pena.

All this leads the Nicaraguan ecclesiastical authorities and the Permanent Commission on Human Rights to believe that the accusations made against Father Luis Amado Pena and other persons mentioned by the prisoner are groundless and part of the campaign of attacks that the leadership of the FSLN is conducting against the democratic sectors in general and the Catholic Church very much in particular.

The Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua requests all persons and institutions interested in human rights to support the call for the reconciliation of the Nicaraguan family through an honest and sincere dialogue between all factions, as the Nicaraguan bishops requested in their Pastoral Letter at Easter, since reconciliation is necessary if the country is to follow the path of respecting human rights. It also asks for support for the Nicaraguan Church and an end to its persecution, particularly so that Luis Amado Pena may be allowed to leave the Seminary and resume his pastoral activities in his parish.

Managua, July 5, 1984

Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua

Church Letter Protesting September 12, 1985, Raid on *Radio Catolica*

Captain Nelba Cecilia Blandon
Directorate of Interior

Captain:

By way of this letter, in the name of *Radio Catolica* of the Church in Nicaragua, we want to make a formal protest concerning the deeds which took place yesterday, September 12:

—At mid-day the Directorate under your direction telephonically prohibited the live transmission of the Holy Mass which his Eminence the Cardinal celebrated in the city of Boaco.

> —In the afternoon, at 6:40 p.m., two heavily armed officials of your office arrived at the station and, in a "military fashion" proceeded to cut the delayed summarized transmission of the celebration of the Mass in Boaco.

This situation of continuing hostility towards the evangelization mission of the Church which impedes the completion of its essential mission concerns us. You must remember you have prohibited us from transmitting news because, according to you, it is not an essential mission of the Church's radio station.

It seems suspicious to us that your Directorate, on the other hand, behaves much more leniently towards those who attempt to divide the Church, called the "Popular Church," who can freely use social communication media, including their usage yesterday of an entire page in a newspaper to defend their viewpoints. We would appreciate your application of what your staff says to foreign visitors affirming that Mass is not prohibited nor are there obstructions to free worship. Once again we claim respect of the legitimate right of the Catholic radio station to freely evangelize by transmitting the Holy Mass on Sundays and special occasions.

Attentively,

Monsignor Bismarck Carballo
Director

Church Letter Protesting September 25, 1985, Raid on *Radio Catolica*

Commander Tomas Borge
Minister of Interior

Dear Mr. Minister:

The undersigned members of the management and staff of *Radio Catolica* of Nicaragua, broadcaster for the Church, by means of this letter want to make our formal protest against recent events provoked by the Directorate of Communications Media in our place of work. These events are as follows:

> On Wednesday, September 25, at 6:30 a.m., a raid of our studios was conducted by armed officials who, without presenting legal documents supporting the decision, in an abusive "military manner" interrupted the transmission of the homily that the Cardinal had delivered in Matagalpa. This reminded us of other events we have suffered in the past.

Mr. Minister, these recurring deeds by the Directorate of Communications Media concern us—our Director has already protested similar events in a letter of September 13 to the Director of Communications Media, Nelba Blandon.

This concerns us, Mr. Minister, because we understand that there have been gestures at the highest level and that you yourself have guaranteed to respect *Radio Catolica*'s right to fulfill its evangelical mission. The fact that the Director of Communications Media notified us by telephone that the Holy Mass will be censored, in order to permit its transmission by delayed broadcast, fills us with deep concern.

The foregoing is a violation of the freedom of worship and expression and is a contradiction of what you yourself expressed to the Cardinal—that there would be no censorship of the Holy Mass.

We demand that the right and freedom of the Church to evangelize through our radio be respected. We await a prompt reply.

Attentively,

Monsignor Bismarck Carballo
Director

[Excerpts from the Catholic Church's *Iglesia*
October 12, 1985]

Jubilant Reception by Residents of Bluefields
Cardinal Takes Message of Peace to Coast

Cardinal Obando y Bravo, Chairman of the Bishops' Conference of Nicaragua, on one of his visits throughout the country, last Saturday took his message of peace to the faithful people of the coast, in the city of Bluefields.

During this far-off visit last Saturday, the Cardinal earned an affectionate welcome not only from thousands of Catholics, but also from other Christians in the region, such as Baptists, Anglicans, and Moravians.

The Archbishop of Managua was invited to Bluefields by Bishop Salvador Schlaefer and his Auxiliary, Pablo Smith, and all the people of Bluefields. On this trip, he was accompanied by the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese, Monsignor Bosco Vivas, and Episcopal Vicars Monsignor Bismarck Carballo and Monsignor Leopoldo Brenes, as well as 20 other people.

In bringing the message of Good News and preaching peace, justice, and freedom to all Nicaraguans, the Cardinal has never retreated from any of the roads he has traveled, whatever the inherent difficulties and circumstances.

"Cardinal Obando, continue to raise the voice of peace, with the same courage you have always had," said one of the laymen of Bluefields to our dear pastor.

During his stay in Bluefields, after covering hundreds of kilometers by vehicle as well as over water, the Cardinal reminded the united people of the coast that they should bring peace to their hearts, so as to be able to build the peace longed for by all of Nicaraguan society.

The Cardinal left the Atlantic Coast the next day, reaching Managua around midnight last Sunday.

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Message Sent to Ortega
Bishops Denounce Harassment of the Church

His Excellency
Comandante Daniel Ortega Saavedra
President of the Republic
Government House
Managua

The bishops of the Bishops' Conference of Nicaragua assembled for their regular annual meeting report the following:

While the problem arising from the conscription of 11 minor seminarians into the S.M.P. [Patriotic Military Service—the Sandinista draft] is still to be resolved as was mentioned in two previous letters, in the last few hours, priests who carry out their ecclesiastic missions in the Archdiocese of Managua and the Diocese of Granada, some of them for many years now, were summoned inopportunely by immigration officials, reminding us of what occurred when the ten priests were expelled in July 1984.

The bishops regard these events as a way of intimidating the church; instead of decreasing tension, they increase it and make church-state dialogue more difficult.

The bishops, in accordance with their mission as ministers of reconciliation, once again express their willingness to continue their dialogue with the government and hope that the above-mentioned problems will be resolved favorably.

Msgr. Bosco Vivas Robelo
Secretary of the Bishops' Conference

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The People Know Their Pastors and Uncover Distorters

Once again we have seen in action *El Nuevo Diario*'s [a pro-Sandinista daily newspaper] old tactic of manipulation against our Cardinal and his appeal for reconciliation. (September 25: "The Cardinal: Seeking Reconcilliation?" by Adolfo Miranda Saenz.)

The tactic is so old that it was used by the Serpent in Paradise and consists in causing distrust toward a person by attributing him with words, ideas, or intentions that he does not have (Genesis 3:1–6), thus leading to the rejection of his authority.

For this, our friend Miranda begins by telling us what the Cardinal and/or the church think and want: "When the Cardinal calls for peace, with the extermination of *Sandinismo*. . . . His thinking is similar to that of the "contra" . . . he does not like anything smelling of socialism . . . his political preference is clearly to the right." Obviously Comrade Miranda has not read the Pastoral Letter of November 17, 1979.

Once he has defined the thought and intentions of our hierarchy as he pleases, he goes on to identify it with "the enemy" in order to be able to attack it as such: "The bishops of Nicaragua—headed by the Cardinal—are in full 'political communion' with the Polish Pope who has a clearly capitalist tendency. . . . The Pope as well as the Cardinal and bishops have the same political ideology as the Reagan Administration and the "contra."

Next, he attributes actions of others to the hierarchy: "There is a sector of Catholicism identified with the cause of the poor. But it is attacked by the others who refer to it pejoratively as the 'Popular Church' . . ." Dear Miranda, the name "Popular Church" was invented by its own creators. In our opinion it is not "popular" in any sense.

Having accomplished his objective, he now goes on to justify the rebellion (true purpose of the Serpent). However, his statement tends towards cynicism: "The revolutionary priests say—and rightly so—that to be in communion with the bishops and the Pope is not the same as identifying with their political options, i.e., they are in communion only insofar as the faith, dogmas, canon discipline, etc., are concerned.

This is where our dear Miranda goes too far. The "Popular Church" has not been condemned for its political choices but rather for its real heresies, for its tendentious manipulation of the Scriptures, its liturgical abuses, etc. And some of its main exponents in the country are no longer in communion with the church since they have been expelled from their priestly ministries and/or removed by their religious orders precisely because of their frank rebellion against canon discipline.

Perhaps the simple people are not always capable of discerning the subtle manipulation of these experts trained to distort the people's minds, but they are always capable of identifying their own, their true pastors. That is why wherever the Cardinal goes, all the people rush to welcome him and demonstrate their faith in Jesus Christ and their fidelity to the church.

And this is a fact that nobody can deny, even if *El Nuevo Diario*, mocking the same people it claims to serve, then publishes articles like the one on September 28, 1985 ("Prophesying over the Next Pope"), in which, intending to make fun of the Cardinal, it actually laughs at the expressions of affection and loyalty of humble people who, come what may, and in spite of *El Nuevo Diario*, will continue to be Christian and faithful to the Pope and their bishops, and devoted to Mary, Mother of God and all us sinners.

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Soldiers Break In

MINT [Ministry of Interior] Muzzles *Radio Catolica*

Armed soldiers from the Ministry of Interior's Directorate of Communications Media violently burst into the studios of *Radio Catolica* on September 12 in order to stop the broadcast of a Mass celebrated that same day by Cardinal Obando in the city of Boaco.

According to statements made to *Iglesia* by Monsignor Bismarck Carballo, director of the radio station, on that day the two officials in military uniform and guns in their belts entered the station's transmission booths by force and made the technicians and announcers stop the Holy Mass which at that moment was on the air.

On that same day, before this military intervention in the official radio station of the Nicaraguan church, the Office of Communications Media had forbidden the live transmission of the celebration being offered from the city of Boaco.

"We are concerned about this situation of permanent hostility toward the evangelizing mission of the Church, which prevents it from fulfilling its essential mission," Monsignor Carballo said in a letter of protest which he later sent to Captain Nelba Cecilia Blandon, head of the Directorate of Communications Media.

In the letter Carballo also said that "we would appreciate it once and for all if you could be consistent with what the leaders (of the Sandinista revolution) say to foreign delegations: that it is not forbidden to broadcast the Mass and that freedom of worship is not obstructed."

* * * *

Cardinal Obando Acclaimed Throughout the Country

The message that His Eminence Miguel Cardinal Obando y Bravo has been delivering to Nicaraguans wherever he has gone can be summarized as a call for national reconciliation, dialogue, and appeasement of hearts in order to find the peace yearned for by Nicaraguans.

With a long and full agenda that only his physical and spiritual strength allow him to carry out, the Archbishop has visited a number of places where huge crowds of faithful Catholics and people of other denominations have routinely given him a joyous welcome.

Cardinal Obando is visiting places from North to South, and East to West, to preach love, justice, and freedom, the pillars on which, he says, peace as well as reconciliation should always be based.

Only those who daily slander the church and its bishops have not been pleased by the popular influence the Cardinal has had wherever he has gone, and they have tried to limit him to his religious services, and not recognize him as a voice for those who have none.

The photographs shown below cannot be more eloquent in terms of what the presence of the Cardinal has meant to the Nicaraguan people.

* * * *

Granadian Clergy Protests Recruitment by the SMP

Seminarians arbitrarily recruited into military service are taken away by force and subjected to humiliation. The following communication on this topic was sent by the clergy of the Department of Rivas to Monsignor Pablo Vega M., Bishop of Juigalpa.

Granada, October, 1985

Msgr. Pablo Vega M.
Bishop of Juigalpa
Managua, D.N.

Your Excellency:

As the CEN [Bishops' Conference] already is aware, six seminarians from the Minor Seminary of Granada, located in San Jorge, were inducted into military service against their will and transferred to the SMP [Patriotic Military Service—the Sandinista draft] base at Ocotal where they are being harassed because they are seminarians.

We have exhausted all possibilities of negotiation in an effort to obtain their release. We have received only promises from the authorities we have approached.

The clergy of the Diocese of Granada requests that the CEN contact the President of the Republic to clarify what he meant when he promised the CEN that students at our major and minor seminaries would not be recruited into military service. We also ask that this violation of the rights of the Church be vigorously opposed and that the CEN support us in the church-wide protests this Diocese plans to hold, for example, by giving "bishops' consent" to a gradual suspension of divine worship in our parishes. Other parishes in what is now known as the Fourth Region might also support such an action.

There being nothing more to report, and wishing Your Excellency and your brothers in the Episcopate the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we respectfully sign ourselves Jose de J. Hernandez (Priest at Potosi); Raul Hernandez (Priest at Belen); Juan Francisco Cuadra (Priest at Altagracia); Miguel Angulo (Priest at Diriomo-Kiria); Sergio Hernandez (First Vicar of the Cathedral); Pedro Reyes (Vicar of Teustepe San Jose); Alfonso Alvarado L. (Priest at Camoapa); and Juan Moreira C. (Priest at El Socorro—Santa Lucia).

Msgr. Francisco Garcia F.
Vicar General

Msgr. Rafael Obregon
Archpriest of Bosco

Edgard Santamaria
Archpriest of Rivas

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Five Seminarians from Rio San Juan Captured

The Church has alledged that five young seminarians, all minors from the Diocese of Chontales y Rio San Juan, were forcibly recruited this past September along with two other sacristans by military personnel from the SMP [Patriotic Military Service—the Sandinista draft].

Msgr. Bosco Vivas Robelo, Secretary of the Conference of Bishops, made a statement to *Iglesia* in which he said that the abduction of the five brings to 11 the total of novices who have been captured by the Sandinistas. Still, government authorities hold out no hope that they will be released to resume their preparation for the priesthood.

The Sandinista military seized the five youths at their seminary, which is located near the city of San Carlos in the Department of San Juan.

* * * *

The Cardinal Calls *Iglesia* a Channel for the Good News

Your Eminence, what is your opinion of the publication of this new ecclesiastical periodical?

— I think that the periodical *Iglesia* will be one more channel by which to bring the Good News of Christ dead and risen to our parishioners. I have always thought that the social communications media play an important role in preaching the Gospel. We know that nowadays, for the great majority of the people, the press, radio, film, and television are like the air we breathe, the water we drink, the sun that shines on us, and the bread we eat. That is to say, the spiritual, religious, cultural, and artistic food for the people, nowadays, comes from the communications media.

I hope that the people who are going to work on the publication of the periodical *Iglesia* will be objective and that they will use this medium to give the Good News to our readers.

What is your opinion of coexistence between church and state?

— We cannot deny that there has been friction between the church and the state. The church, however, believes that the problems should be solved through dialogue, and the Bishops' Conference of Nicaragua has appointed a committee composed of two bishops to maintain a dialogue with a government committee. We must admit that in spite of the conversations, our missionaries continue to be harassed.

Captain Mejia recently said the following to some of the missionaries who work with such enthusiasm in Nicaragua:

He said he knew that the foreign missionaries, taking advantage of their ministries as priests, meddle in the internal affairs of Nicaragua, which are the executive right of Nicaraguans; they knew who those priests were, but that until now they had been tolerant of these attitudes, abuses, and offenses.

From that moment on, starting with this meeting, drastic, painful, but necessary measures would be taken against those that have broken the laws of the nation, acting against the security, well-being, and peace of the Nicaraguan family.

They also know the foreign priests who abuse the right to preach the Catholic doctrine, given to them by the people of Nicaragua upon entering the country (incredible but true).

This meeting to warn them will be the last measure of tolerance that the government and Nicaraguan people will grant these priests. He alluded to the ten priests expelled for meddling in Nicaraguan politics.

These points that I have cited were repeated several times as if they were on a long-playing record. He would not back down from them.

When he was asked to be more specific about abuses, attitudes, and offenses, he simply said that in some parishes, he did not say where, the military service had been attacked and the country's economic situation had been criticized.

During the entire statement, he did not mention or make any reference to the six seminarians conscripted by the military. Nor did he refer to the statement made by the bishop of Granada regarding the six conscripted seminarians, which was read on Sunday, September 29.

But, he did draw some corollaries and conclusions:

1. Any foreign priest can be expelled from the country without any explanation.
2. Any measure adopted by a foreign priest in fulfillment of ecclesiastic superior orders is considered domestic policy, if the measure is opposed to or displeases—as provocation—the Sandinista government.
3. He threatened to expel the foreign priests from the country.

* * * *

Bishop L. Fitoria Denounces More Seminarians Conscripted

In a statement addressed to the Catholic faithful, the bishop and clergy of the Diocese of Granada denounced the conscription of six of their seminarians, demanded "the rightful freedom" to preach the Gospel, and reported persecution by those trying to control the church by adapting the evangelization to their partisan interests and the circumstances of power.

The note dated September 24, 1985, and signed by Monsignor Leovigildo Lopez Fitoria regarding the apprehended seminarians, calls for the fulfillment of the promise made in ongoing talks by the President of the Sandinista government to the Church that the military service authorities would not conscript seminarians aspiring to the priesthood.

The message addressed to the faithful asks them to pray for the release of the minor seminarians apprehended in San Jorge and Popoyuapa, Department of Rivas, and now being held in a concentration camp in Ocotal.

Statement by the Catholic Church on the Expanded State of Emergency

The bishops of the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference, because of the latest events experienced by the Church and the whole country, consider it our pastoral duty to:

1. Invite Catholics and men of good will to reflect seriously over the latest national government decree which restricts the exercise of fundamental rights for collective development and which suspends indispensable guarantees for all Nicaraguans.

We consider it so very necessary to call to mind these measures, in as much as in Nicaragua it has been the people who have been the most sacrificed and who have most vividly demanding the social changes necessary to guarantee peaceful co-existence and integral progress.

2. Manifest that: the intimidation of priests, the raiding of and intervention in church properties, and the threats of pressures on laymen in church ministries endanger the respect and guarantee of rights so fundamental as the freedom of conscience and expression of religious convictions of Catholics.

3. Reiterate our proposal to maintain a frank and constructive dialogue with the government. We believe that the Nicaraguan people deserve the effort of everyone to build an authentic peace in our country.

4. Urge Catholics to contribute their own conversion to the well-being of Nicaragua manifested by fervent prayer to Jesus Christ and to this most Holy Mother, through authentic penance and in the commitment for the construction of a more fraternal society.

Given at Managua the 18th day of October 1985. Faithfully, Monsignor Bosco Vivas Robelo, Auxiliary Bishop of the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference.

Statement by the Catholic Church on Recent Attacks by the Sandinistas

During the last two months, the Sandinista government, through many of its institutions, has been carrying out a series of attacks against the Catholic Church which have seriously affected its evangelizing mission. These attacks, which have been increasing, seriously obstruct freedom of religion and worship, still in force as of last October 15.

Chronology

September 24

Eleven seminarians from the Diocese of Grenada and the Prelature of Juigalpa were apprehended arbitrarily and conscripted into military service. The young men were transferred to the Ocotal military base where they were abused as new recruits. These events occurred in spite of the promise made by the President of the Republic to the effect that young seminarians would not be conscripted into military service.

October 1

Foreign priests working in the Diocese of Granada and in the Departments of Masaya and Carazo, which belong to the Archdiocese of Managua, were summoned by the Director of Immigration and Alien Affairs—a department of the Ministry of Interior—to warn them that: any foreign priest may be expelled from the country without any explanation; any measure adopted by a foreign priest in fulfillment of orders from higher Church authorities will be considered [evidence of participation in] domestic politics if that measure displeases the government, and the priest consequently risks being expelled from the country.

October 11

Ministry of Interior officials confiscated the first edition of the Catholic newsletter *Iglesia,* and forced the Episcopal Vicar for Media Affairs to hand over the printing plates and negatives for the above-mentioned publication. According to the Directorate of Communications Media of the Ministry of Interior, that drastic measure resulted from the fact that the newsletter had not been registered in advance. However, this explanation was not valid since the necessary registration formalities had already been completed.

October 15

8:30 a.m.: Led by *Comandante* Lenin Cerna, Director of the General Directorate of State Security, and by Captain Oscar Loza, Chief of Operations, heavily armed soldiers raided and occupied the Department of Pastoral Social Services of the Archdiocese of Managua, the facilities of which belong to and are part of the archbishopric Curia.

9:15 a.m.: Monsignor Bismarck Carballo, Episcopal Vicar in charge of Social Communications Media, appeared at the offices occupied by State Security for an explanation, but was pushed away from the premises.

9:30 a.m.: Monsignor Bosco Vivas Robelo, Auxiliary Bishop, Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Managua, and Secretary of the Bishops' Conference of Nicaragua, spoke on the telephone with Dr. Rodrigo Reyes, Minister of Justice, to ask for an explanation of what had occurred at the offices of the Pastoral Social Services. The minister stated he had no knowledge of what had occurred.

10:15 a.m.: Monsignor Bosco Vivas went to the offices of Pastoral Social Services and in addition to not being allowed in, he was denied any explanation.

1:00 p.m.: His Eminence Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo went personally to the offices of the Pastoral Social Services of the Archdiocese, but he was not allowed to enter the premises—by order, he was told by one of the people in the office, of the Ministry of Justice.

6:00 p.m.: The Sandinista government decreed a national State of Emergency, suspending the rights and guarantees of Nicaraguans throughout the country. To justify the measure, the President of the Republic told journalists: ". . . in our country, the agents of imperialism acting from within some political parties, media, or religious institutions, are intensifying their activities in order to sabotage the military effort to defend the homeland, obstruct the economic policies, and cause confusion and discontent among the masses . . . ." (*Barricada,* October 16).

6:00 p.m.: The Ministry of Interior issued a communique to make public the Ministry of Justice's "intervention" in the Curia's Department of Pastoral Social Services, using as an excuse the so-called illegality of the publication of the *Iglesia* newsletter.

October 17

8:00 p.m.: The administrator of the Curia's Department of Pastoral Social Services, Mr. Roberto Rivas, and its Education Chief, Mr. Horacio Gonzalez, were summoned by State Security to give evidence regarding the "intervened" offices. Both were interrogated personally by *Comandante* Lenin Cerna while they were filmed and photographed.

October 21

The President of the Republic stated at a press conference that ". . . for open-air religious activities (parades, processions, etc.) to take place, a request for authorization must be submitted by the parish priest or equivalent of that parish or church to the Ministry of Interior authorities or the Sandinista police in charge of authorizing this kind of activity. This applies to any open-air parades organized by Cardinal Obando or any other bishop in the country, or by any parish priest or other priest or religious person . . . ." (*Barricada,* October 22, 1985, page 6).

October 23

Comandante Bayardo Arce, member of the National Directorate of the FSLN, said at a press conference in the presence of foreign correspondents that ". . . the newspaper *La Iglesia* was restricted because the legal formalities had not been completed. The press where it was published was not registered and COPROSA, the company listed as the owner of the press, was not registered either . . ." (*Nuevo Diario,* October 24, 1985).

The justifications that the government has been advancing to explain the military occupation of the offices of Pastoral Social Services (COPROSA), the confiscation of the newspaper *Iglesia,* and the closing of the press of the archdiocese are not only absurd but completely false, for several reasons:

1. Before the newsletter *Iglesia* was disseminated, the documents with all the information regarding its circulation and management had been presented to Directorate of Communications Media.
2. The press of the archdiocese, IMAR (*Impresiones Arquidiocesanas*), had been authorized to operate by the Ministry of Domestic Trade, and it had been found in compliance with tax regulations by the Ministry of Finance. It was therefore operating legally.
3. The offices of the Department of Pastoral Social Services of the Curia, COPROSA, do not need registration or special authorization to operate as they belong to the archdiocesan Curia and are represented by that legal entity.

October 28

The technical advisor of the press of the archdiocese, Julio Rodas Anaya, was summoned by the Directorate of State Security to be interrogated about the activities of the press.

October 30

The Director of Communications Media summoned the Director of *Radio Catolica,* Monsignor Bismarck Carballo, to notify him of the 48-hour suspension of radio broadcasts. The decision resulted from the fact that, through human error, the radio technician broadcast Cardinal Obando's weekly message in which he referred to ". . . freedom as one of the most precious gifts from God . . .," a phrase which had been censored. Another reason for the suspension was the broadcasting of testimonial songs, which were very popular during the pre-insurrectional period and which were also censored by the previous regime.

We believe that the facts stated above constitute serious attempts to destroy and obstruct the evangelizing mission of the Church.

Managua, October 30, 1985

Papal Letter to the Nicaraguan Church

His Eminence Cardinal Obando y Bravo,
Archbishop of Managua,
Beloved Bishops of Nicaragua:

The liturgical season of Advent, which began recently, places us in the spiritual perspective of waiting for the Lord Jesus, who is coming into the world as a child.

His name, chosen by God the Father and revealed to Mary, "full of grace," by the Archangel Gabriel, clearly expresses the mission entrusted to him to save "His people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21), achieving the ultimate reconciliation of man with God. The Apostle Paul describes this event in mysterious terms: "When the appointed time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, to redeem the subjects of the Law and to enable us to be adopted as sons" (Gal 4:4–5).

The coming among us of the Son of God, then, has a specific, historical context, but most of all a realism—the womb and the heart of a mother—that generates deep emotions in us. It is the mystery we genuflect before on Christmas, when we say, "For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man." It seems natural, therefore, that along the short liturgical journey that leads us to the creche, the Church pauses to reflect on the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of Mary who, "redeemed in an especially sublime manner manner by reason of the merits of her Son," and "adorned from the first instant of her conception with the splendors of an entirely unique holiness," (*Lumen Gentium,* 53, 56), prefigures the new creation born of God in Christ (CF. 2 Cor 5:17).

For centuries, the Catholic community of Nicaragua has venerated and glorified Mary, of sublime perfection, calling her *la purésima* [the most pure]," and celebrating her feast with great liturgical and popular solemnity, preceded by the preparatory novena.

It is in this spiritual climate of the celebration of the mystery of *la purésima* that I wished to make my presence felt among you with this letter to show you my affection and express my esteem and my support for you, Cardinal, the Archbishop of Managua, to my beloved brothers in the Episcopate, and to priests, religious, and faithful Catholics. Indeed, I know that on the feast of *la purésima* I find you all gathered around Mary in the churches of your cities and your countryside, in the public squares, the streets and highways, gathered like children under her mantle, to extol her who, having given the world that very life which renews all things, was enriched by God with the gift and privilege of being *la purésima* from the moment of her birth (CF. *Lumen Gentium,* 56). Her feast, both symbolic and real, brings all Nicaraguans together as one family. Against this moving background of prayer and celebration, contrasting, unfortunately, so markedly with the painful reality you have lived with every day for so long: suffering and privation, sorrow and uncertainty—I see affirmed the announcement of the Apostle Paul: "For He is the peace between us, and has made the two peoples into one and broken down the barrier of hostility between them" (Eph 2:14).

You know well, my beloved bishops, that you have been specifically entrusted with the ministry and the word of reconciliation (CF. 2 Cor 5:18, 19). This task encapsulates the very mission of the Church, which is called upon to show the way to reconciliation, through "conversion of the heart and victory over sin, whether it be selfishness or injustice, dominance or exploitation of others, attachment to worldly goods, or unbridled pleasure-seeking" (*Reconciliatio et Paenitentia,* 8).

You, beloved brothers, are especially aware of this duty, as you showed in your Easter Pastoral Letter on reconciliation to Nicaraguan Catholics on April 22, 1984. I am certain that you will continue to carry out, with confidence and perseverance, the mission Christ has entrusted to you. I wish with all my heart that the seed planted in the fertile ground that is the conscience of your faithful will soon bring forth fruit of harmony and brotherhood.

I am, of course, aware of your difficulties at the present time. Do not be afraid and do not despair, for you know that nothing "can ever come between us and the love of God in Christ Jesus" (Rm 8:39). Keep strong within yourselves the supreme certainties of the faith you are called upon to defend and develop in your faithful. The Christian vocation—especially living in a community, by different names, as loyal and faithful pastors of the flock—involves sacrifice, renunciation, and denial. Follow the example of the apostles who traveled the cities and towns preaching the Gospel, "confirming disciples, encouraging them to persevere in the faith, and reminding them that we have to experience many hardships before we enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

In recent weeks, the problems in carrying out your pastoral activities and those of your colleagues have increased. In July of last year, the Archdiocese of Managua experienced, with the expulsion of ten esteemed priests, a drastic reduction in its personnel, which had always been quite low in number. This situation has yet to be rectified.

New difficulties that have arisen make it uncertain for other priests whether they will be able to remain in the country. I also know that you suffer because of various obstacles the Church has encountered, and from different types of intimidation and indignities to priests and faithful Catholics. It is my fervent hope that existing problems can be promptly resolved in a satisfactory manner.

A Catholic community that must practice its faith under such conditions requires from its members a profound sense of unity and devotion to its pastors.

I wrote this to you already in my letter of June 29, 1982, on the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul: "In this historic moment for Nicaragua and the Church in this country, all the children of the Church should try to help maintain solidarity with their pastors, and to avoid any seed of rupture or division."

Indeed, as far as man's eternal destiny is concerned and the supernatural means of obtaining it, it must be said that he who comes into the community to teach the word of God or to administer the sacraments has a profound *sentire cum ecclesia.* My predecessor Paul VI stressed this point in serious terms when he said that "no one can (fulfill this mission) without having been sent" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi, No. 59*), and added, "to evangelize is not an individual, isolated act for anyone; it is profoundly ecclesiastic. This supposes that the preacher (catechist or pastor) evangelizes not because of a mission entrusted to him or out of personal inspiration, but in union with the mission of the Church and in His name" (*Ibid.*, No. 60). Paul VI recalled elsewhere how "the force of evangelization" would be greatly weakened if those who announce the Gospel are divided among themselves by so many types of discord" (*Ibid.*, No. 77).

Unity and cohesion are fundamental, urgent requirements in your ecclesiastical community. With the same hope and expectation as I expressed at the end of my homily in Managua on March 4, 1983, during my apostolic visit to your country, I reiterate my wish that through "the intercession of Mary, *la purésima,* to use your lovely name for her, may she who is the patron of Nicaragua help you to always be faithful to this vocation of ecclesiastical unity and faithfulness."

The concerns I have expressed to you—which are also your concerns—dear brothers in the Episcopate, do not dampen the feeling of spiritual comfort and joy I feel in thinking of so many priests, religious, and faithful Catholics testifying to their loyalty to the Gospel and to the Church. I urge you to persevere, with your eyes and your heart trained on your pastors, following their word and their guidelines. And you, beloved brothers, to whom the entire Catholic community of Nicaragua looks as a vital point of reference for the life of faith, be always "models of the flock," entrusted to you by Christ, supreme pastor of souls (CF. 1 Pet 2), always remaining united among each other. Nourish it with piety and love, increasing the fervor of your faith, the ardor of your hope, and the diligence of your charity. Remember the words of the Apostle Peter: "No one can hurt you if you are determined to do only what is right; if you do have to suffer for being good you will count it a blessing. There is no need to be afraid or to worry about them. Simply reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have, that it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong" (1 Pet 3:13).

At this time when we are holding a special synod of bishops, you have the prayers and affection of the Bishop of Rome, and may you find comfort in the thoughts, made prayer, of so many pastors of the Church and their flocks. For your edification and support, follow the example of your brother churches who have been privileged, by the mercy of God, not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for Him as well (Ph 1:29).

In taking spiritual leave of you, I send cordial greetings to all the people of Nicaragua: the children, the youth, the elderly, and all fathers and mothers. My regards are directed especially toward those who suffer because of illness or violence, and those tested by painful loss, loneliness, or separation from their loved ones. Invoking the Lord who is to come, through the intercession of His mother most pure, the Virgin Mary, for the peace and solace of all, I bestow upon you my apostolic blessing.

The Vatican
December 1, 1985
First Sunday of Advent
Pope John Paul II

Statement of the Central American Archbishops in Support of the Nicaraguan Church

We, the archbishops and members of the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Secretariat for Central America and Panama (S.E.D.A.C.), meeting in Rome with the successor of Saint Peter to represent the local Central American churches at the special synod of bishops convened by the Pope to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the conclusion of Vatican II, have welcomed with devotion and gratitude the letter of today's date from His Holiness to the Cardinal, Archbishop of Managua, to all the bishops of that beloved country, and to all the people of Nicaragua. With reference to that letter, we wish to state the following:

We sincerely thank His Holiness for such an important letter expressing his solidarity with all churches, and especially with those, such as that of Nicaragua, encountering special problems in fulfilling Christ's mission of announcing the Gospel.

We are in complete concurrence with everything expressed in the letter and we hope that by making its concerns and aspirations our own, this will contribute to our brother Nicaraguan Church's enjoying its right to carry out its religious mission, being able to collaborate in the comprehensive progress and development of that beloved nation. We also take this opportunity, as members of the Board of Directors of SEDAC, to express our encouragement and support to our fellow bishops and Nicaraguan brothers who, in the past few weeks have suffered arbitrary arrests of many people accused of collaborating with the Church. They have been subjected to humiliation, lengthy interrogations, and physical and moral duress. Since such acts are in violation of human rights, we denounce them publicly and ask the authorities to cease this harmful practice so that the country's citizens will regain their trust and the appropriate solution to any problems can be sought in a climate of tranquillity.

Finally, we invite the more than 25 million Catholics of Central America to join with us, their pastors, in fervent prayer to Jesus Christ, through the Immaculate Conception of Mary, beloved of our peoples, so that peace, the blessed gift of the Father, will descend where it does not now exist, and will be strengthened where it already exists, on a foundation of love, freedom, justice, and full respect for the human rights of all our citizens.

With our blessing,

Msgr. Arturo Rivera Damas
Archbishop of San Salvador,
President of SEDAC

Msgr. Marcos Gregorio McGrath
Archbishop of Panama

Miguel Cardinal Obando y Bravo
Archbishop of Managua

Msgr. Roman Arrieta Villalobos
Archbishop of San Jose

Msgr. Hector Enrique Santos Hernandez
Archbishop of Tegucigalpa

Msgr. Prospero Penados del Barrio
Archbishop of Guatemala

From the Vatican, December 7, 1985

Cardinal Obando y Bravo's Letter to United Nations Secretary General Perez de Cuellar on the Situation of the Church in Nicaragua

Your Excellency:

I want to express my appreciation for the exquisite kindness you have shown to me in granting an opportunity to be able to converse with Your Excellency.

The United Nations and its distinguished Secretary General can contribute to the encouragement of contacts conducive to better understanding among the governments and peoples of Central America.

In this regard, I have the firm conviction that with the aid of men of good will, we will be able to construct a peace based on: love, truth, justice and liberty.

We Bishops of Nicaragua have the firm purpose of searching, through all the means at our disposal, for peace for our long-suffering people. We have, also, the desire of maintaining a constructive dialogue with the government of Nicaragua, not only to avoid tensions, but to arrive at a climate of mutual respect, even of cooperation for the good of all.

An internal dialogue would serve to promote, from the lively radicality of our people, a propitious path for the reconstruction of the fatherland in peace and liberty.

The Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference, concerned about the situation of our people and their Church, has sent a letter on December 6 to President Daniel Ortega, saying the following:

> "Whereas Your Excellency has reiterated to the Bishops of this Episcopal Conference your will to resolve through dialogue the problems which affect the profession and the exercise of the Christian Faith of our People, we wish to express to you:
>
> That on three occasions now we have written to Your Excellency without having received so much as an acknowledgment of receipt of our requests.
>
> That the channel established through a Governmental Commission and a Delegation of ours has been prevented constantly from doing what is intended because of the constant appearance of new conflicts and even because of the failure to honor what had seemed to be agreed previously, using as excuses "unilateral interpretations." So what we thought had been accomplished goes backward, and what needs to be done gets put aside indefinitely.
>
> The clamor of the faithful is widespread in the countryside and in the cities, throughout the nation they feel concerned to the point of believing that we are in a state of being persecuted.
>
> In addition, many people interested in the situation of Nicaragua express to us their bewilderment and worry in the face of attacks of which the Church is victim.
>
> Among the events to which we refer we can cite:
>
> —The intimidation and threats against foreign priests and Religious people "if they mix in politics."
>
> —The summoning of Nicaraguan priests by the General Directorate of State Security and by police prosecution, with the purpose of interrogating them, warning them "not to mess in politics" and leaving them with a record in the same manner as is done with criminals.
>
> —The pressures and threats and even jailing of lay workers who cooperate in Church activities, with the goal of separating them from their ecclesiastical work and, if it were possible, to force them to cooperate as informers against the Church itself.
>
> —The harassment of Church Institutions which, in the case of the Archdiocesan Social Welfare Commission of Managua and the Christ the King Mission Nursery School in Grenada, have arrived at Government intervention.
>
> —The mistreatment to which some Catholics have been subjected, forcing them to sign documents containing falsehoods and slander against the honor of ecclesiastical persons.
>
> —The iron-like censorship which even comes down to blocking or mutilating the publications and content of official Church Documents; meanwhile, for the constant attacks against religion, its Principles and its Representatives, there is full freedom in the official media and organisms.

From the foregoing, Mr. President, we consequently conclude that what is being sought with all of this could be:

To want to neutralize religious activity and the evangelical preaching of the Church under false accusations of "politicking."

To isolate Catholics from each other and from their Pastors by means of fear and slander.

To narrow the vital space of the church in order to reduce it, were it possible, to the state of a "Church of Silence."

To deprive the Church of the means and materials necessary to spread the Gospel.

In the first days of the month of January, after less than one month, the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua sent a new letter to President Daniel Ortega in which we express the following:

"The Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua, deeply concerned about the resolution by the Directorate of Communications Media and the Interior Ministry to shut down *Radio Católica de Nicaragua,* property of the Nicaraguan Episcopate and official channel of the Catholic Church in our country, request from Your Excellency your valuable efforts leading to reconsiderations of said resolution which not only deprives the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference of its only means of communication available, but also denies to the Nicaraguan people, the majority of whom are Catholic, of the right to be informed about ecclesiastical life."

I want to reiterate, Mr. Secretary General of the United Nations, Dr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, my appreciation for this attention given to me, and I have the firm conviction that you will do all in your power so that we Nicaraguans can find roads which will allow us to live in peace, fraternity, and liberty.

Letter From the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference to the Bishops's Conferences of the World

The Bishops of the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference fraternally greet the bishops of the Bishops' Conferences of the World and wish to share with them the sufferings and hopes of the pilgrim church in Nicaragua and to seek their prayers and solidarity in making known the following:

1. In the face of pressures and threats from the government of the Republic (of Nicaragua), the situation of the church in Nicaragua becomes more difficult each day.

A) The Holy Father, John Paul II, and the Bishops of the country are constantly shown disrespect and slandered through the government communications media. "With special commitment, they seek to present the Bishops as persecutors of priests and as allies, followers and supporters of the imperialistic plans of the United States, and to present The Holy Father as the executor of those plans." (CFR letter from the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference on "The Eucharist – Source of Unity and Reconciliation," April 6, 1986). It even reached the point of having been written in an editorial of an official daily that: "Between Reagan, who yesterday said that he had drawn a smile on the Statue of Liberty with the approval of the millions for his mercenaries, and this Pope, who only dedicates prayers to dead yankees and overflowing with accusations and threats to the victims of imperialism, exists the most treacherous coherence and the most serious danger for the people since the years in which barbarism and genocide were committed in the name of the cross and empire." (El Nuevo Diario, July 6, 1985.)

B) The priests who are faithful to their bishops are visited constantly by members of state security with the intent of separating them from their bishops by means of flattery or threats. Equal craftiness is used on the faithful to separate them from their pastors and to pressure them into becoming informants against their own church, threatening them or their families with reprisals if they do not comply.

C) In the past seven years, the church has been deprived of two religious and 16 priests who have been expelled from the country by the Sandinista government.

D) A Nicaraguan priest, Monsignor Bismarck Carballo, director of Catholic radio and Episcopal Vicar of communications media, has been expatriated (June 28, 1986).

Monsignor Pablo Antonio Vega, a Nicaraguan, Bishop of Juigalpa, Vice President of the Nicaraguan Bishops, Conference, and member of the Pontifical Commission of Justice and Peace located in his see, was expelled from the country on July 4, 1986.

E) Difficulties have increased to the point of making it impossible to get residence visas for priests and religious who wish to come to Nicaragua, in union with the Bishops, to work pastorally. Even the sisters of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, after a year of trying, have been denied the possibility of establishing two communities in Nicaragua. Religious of the popular church who come to work for the government's cause have no difficulties whatsoever in this area.

2. The silence imposed upon the church is complete – inside as well as outside of the country:

A) It has been unable to use television since 1981. All documents from the Holy See and from the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference are censored, even to the point of impeding the publication of the Holy Father's letter to the Bishops of Nicaragua (June 29, 1982), which was published only after a time and which was then accompanied by an offensive commentrary from the communications department of the Ministry of Interior. It (the Church) was prohibited from publishing communiques and a pastoral letter from the Episcopal Conference (April 6, 1986).

B) The newspaper, *Iglesia*, an informative organ of the Archdiocese of Managua, was confiscated October 12, 1985.

C) The press on which *Iglesia* and a parish leaflet containing the Sunday liturgical texts, in publication for nearly eight years, was also confiscated (October 14, 1985).

D) Catholic Radio of Nicaragua, which had been censored for several years, was closed the first of January 1986.

E) As of three months ago, the few independent media such as *La Prensa*, closed June 26, 1986, were prohibited from publishing Cardinal Miguel Obando's Sunday homilies and other articles and statements by members of the Hierarchic Church, even though publication of slander against the Church in the various government communications media was permitted and encouraged.

F) Anyone who expresses opinions considered by the government to be subversive, whether inside or outside of Nicaragua, is threatened with expulsion from the country.

G) The church is slandered and accused of not talking, without taking into account that during 1985 there was a series of conversations of the church-state commission, 10 in all, and that it has made numerous proposals for dialogue which many times have remained unanswered, such as the last letter on the subject delivered to the government on May 2, 1986.

H) The moral and physical security of bishops, priests, religious and faithful is constantly threatened with scandals, demonstrations by "tureas" (Government-sponsored mobs), and by threats of death or expulsion from the country if they persist in their faithfulness to the church and in their defense of human rights.

3. The so-called popular church, which is totally at the service of the Government's cause, is the most dangerous weapon used by the government to divide the church (CFR, Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference pastoral letter of April 5, 1986). These priests and religious, members of the popular church, are repeaters at the international level of the ideas and slanders of the government against the church.

We think that these facts, though incomplete, can be used to let the truth of what is happening to the Nicaraguan church be better known.

United in the prayer of Christ and Mary,
Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference.

Given in Faith,

Monsignor Bosco Vivas Robelo,
Auxiliary Bishop of Managua and
Secretary of the Nicaraguan Bishops' Conference
Managua, 7th of July, 1986.

IGLESIA

AÑO 1 No.1

INFORMATIVO CATOLICO

Apartado: No. 2183, *Managua, Nicaragua-12 de Octubre-1985*.

Jubiloso recibimiento de blufileños

Cardenal llevó mensaje de paz a la Costa

El Presidente de la Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, Cardenal Miguel Obando y Bravo en las visitas que hace por todos los lugares del país, el pasado sábado llevó su voz peregrina de paz al creyente pueblo de la Costa, en la ciudad de Bluefields.

En esta distante visita que el pasado sábado hizo el Cardenal, no solamente mereció el saludo y cariño de los miles de católicos, sino que también de las otras sectas que agrupan a los cristianos de esa región, tales como los Bautistas, Anglicanos y Moravos.

El viaje que el Arzobispo de Managua hizo a Bluefields, por invitación del Obispo Salvador Schlaefer y su Auxiliar Pablo Smith, y por todo el pueblo blufileño, fue acompañado desde Managua por el Obispo Auxiliar de la Arquidiócesis, Monseñor Bosco Vivas, y por los Vicarios Episcopa-

PASA A LA PAGINA 7

Entrada del Cardenal a la ciudad de Bluefields.

Cardenal Obando, Presidente de la CEN

RESULTADO DE LA ELECCION DE LA NUEVA DIRECTIVA DE LA CONFERENCIA EPISCOPAL DE NICARAGUA Y RESPONSABLES DE DEPARTAMENTOS Y COMISIONES EPISCOPALES

Presidente: Su Eminencia Cardenal Miguel Obando Bravo, Arzobispo de Managua.
Vice - Presidente: Mons. Pablo Antonio Vega M. Obispo de Juigalpa.
Secretario: Mons. Bosco Vivas Robelo, Obispo Auxiliar de Managua.
Tesorero: Mons. Carlos Santi, Obispo de Matagalpa.
Departamento Liturgia y Catequesis: Mons. Rubén López Ardón, Obispo de Estelí.
Comunicación Social: Su Eminencia

PASA A LA PAGINA 7

EDITORIAL

Un nuevo informativo católico ha nacido

Nos aproximamos este 12 de Octubre de 1985, a los 500 años de evangelización de América Latina, faltando sólo siete años para tan magna fecha.

En un 12 de Octubre de 1492, la cruz redentora de Cristo se posó en estas tierras para conquistar el corazón de América y hacer de este continente la masa más numerosa de católicos del mundo.

PASA A LA PAGINA 7

Se anuncia Congreso Eucarístico

El anuncio oficial del Congreso Eucarístico a celebrarse a finales del próximo año, fue hecho recientemente por el Presidente de la Conferencia Episcopal, Cardenal Miguel Obando Bravo, el nombrar una comisión de preparatoria para su organización.

El Congreso Eucarístico que se espera para las fiestas de Cristo Rey en 1986, cuenta no solamente con la dirección de

PASA A LA PAGINA 7

Envían mensaje a Ortega

Obispos denuncian acoso a la Iglesia

Excmo.
Señor Presidente de la República
Com. Daniel Ortega Saavedra
Casa de Gobierno
Managua

Los Obispos de la Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, reunidos en sesión anual ordinaria, hacen de su conocimiento lo siguiente:

Mientras todavía se espera la solución al problema planteado por el reclutamiento de once seminaristas menores al

PASA A LA PAGINA 7

A 500 años de evangelización

Latinoamérica resiste modelos ateos

Su Santidad, el Papa Juan Pablo II, ha hecho un llamado a la Iglesia latinoamericana con motivo del inicio del NOVENARIO de celebración del Quinto Centenario de la evangelización de América y la llegada de los colonizadores al nuevo mundo.

En el Estadio Olímpico de Santo Domingo, República Dominicana, Su Santidad, el día 12 de Octubre de 1984, habló ante unos 35,000 dirigentes católicos —Obispos del CELAM y Representantes de otras Conferencias Episcopales —, para señalar la importancia trascendental que tuvo para la Humanidad la evangelización de América, hace casi quinientos años.

"Se iniciaba en estas tierras la obra que Cristo confió a su Iglesia: la evangelización de todas las gentes. La preparación de ese Centenario es el motivo que nos congrega".

"Con cuánto gozo saludo hoy a esta Iglesia Evangelizadora y Evangelizada, que en un gran impulso de creatividad y juventud ha logrado que casi la mitad de todos los católicos estén en América Latina, de esa juventud apostólica, llena de esperanza". El Santo Padre, expresó a la multitud que, en el aspecto humano la llegada de los descubridores a suelo americano significó una fantástica ampliación de las fronteras de la humanidad, el mutuo hallazgo de dos mundos, la aparición de la 'ecumene' entera ante los ojos del hombre, el principio de la historia universal en su proceso de interacción, con todos sus beneficios y contradicciones, sus luces y sus sombras.

En el aspecto evangelizador, tal suceso marcaba la puesta en marcha de un despliegue misionero sin precedentes, que partiendo de la península Ibérica daría pronto una nueva configuración al mapa eclesial. Y lo haría en un momento en que las conmociones religiosas en Europa provocaban luchas y visiones parciales que necesitaron de nuevas tierras para volcar en ellas la creatividad de la fe.

En el prorrumpir vigoroso de la universalidad querida por Cristo, como expresó San Mateo.

"La Iglesia —dijo el Papa—, quiere acercarse a celebrar estos quinientos años con la humildad de la verdad, sin triunfalismos ni falsos pudores, solamente mirando a la verdad, para dar gracias a Dios por los aciertos y sacar del error motivos para proyectarse renovada hacia el futuro.

Refiriéndose a la nueva raza que surgió de los acontecimientos de la llegada de los colonizadores y sus reflejos siguientes, el Sumo Pontífice señaló que los hombres y pueblos del nuevo mestizaje americano, fueron engendrados también por la novedad de la fe cristiana, y en el rostro de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe está simbolizada la potencia y arraigo de esta primera evangelización.

"En el seno de una sociedad propensa a ver los beneficios materiales que podía lograr con la esclavitud o explotación de los indios, surge la protesta inequívoca desde la conciencia cristiana del evangelio, que denuncia la inobservancia de las exigencias de dignidad y fraternidad humana, fundadas en la creación y en la filiación divina de los hombres".

Los Misioneros formaban pueblos, construían casas e Iglesias, llevaban el agua, enseñaban a cultivar la tierra, introducían nuevos cultivos, distribuían animales y herramientas de trabajo, abrían hospitales; difundían las artes como la escultura, pintura, orfebrería, enseñaban nuevos oficios, etc.

Cerca de cada Iglesia, como preocupación prioritaria surgía la escuela para formar a los niños.

Mirando hacia el futuro, Juan Pablo II expresó que al contemplar el panorama que se abre a la nueva evangelización, no es posible desconocer los desafíos que esa labor ha de enfrentar.

—La escasez de Ministros calificados para tal misión, pone el primero y quizás mayor obstáculo.

—La secularización de la sociedad, ante la necesidad de vivir los valores radicalmente cristianos, plantea otra seria limitación.

—Las cortapisas puestas a veces a la libre profesión de la fe son, por desgracia, hechos comprobables en diversos lugares.

—Al antitestimonio de diversos cristianos incoherentes o las divisiones eclesiales crean evidente escándalo en la comunidad cristiana.

—El clamor por una urgente justicia, demasiado largamente esperada, se eleva desde una sociedad que busca la debida dignidad.

El Sumo Padre añade que la corrupción en la vida pública, los conflictos armados, los ingentes gastos para preparar muerte y no progreso, la falta de sentido ético en tantos campos, siembran cansancio y rompen ilusiones de un mejor futuro.

A todo ello se añaden las inestabilidades entre naciones, un comportamiento no correcto en las relaciones internacionales y en los intercambios comerciales, que crean nuevos desequilibrios, y ahora se presenta el grave problema de la deuda externa de los países del tercer mundo, en particular de América Latina.

"América Latina —clama Juan Pablo II — desde tu fidelidad a Cristo resiste a quienes quieren ahogar tu vocación de esperanza, a la tentación de quienes quieren olvidar tu innegable vocación cristiana y los valores que la plasman, para buscar modelos sociales que prescinden de ella o la contradicen, a la tentación de lo que pueda debilitar la comunión con la Iglesia."

Y descubre a distorsionadores

Pueblo conoce a sus Pastores

De nuevo hemos visto en accion las viejas tácticas de manipulación del Nuevo Diario en contra de nuestro Cardenal y su llamado a la reconciliación. (Sept. 25. "El Cardenal: busca la reconciliación?. Adolfo Miranda Sáenz).

La táctica es tan vieja que fue usada por la Serpiente en el Paraíso y consiste en suscitar desconfianza hacia una persona atribuyéndole palabras, ideas o intenciones que la persona no tiene. (Gen. 3: 1 - 6) y provocar así un rechazo a su autoridad.

Para esto el amigo Miranda comienza diciéndonos lo que el Cardenal y/o la Iglesia piensan y quieren: "Cuando el Cardenal llama a la paz mediante la reconciliación, está pensando en la paz de Reagan, mediante la exterminación del Sandinismo. . . Su pensamiento coincide con la "contra". . . no le gusta nada que huela a socialismo. . . tiene una opción política claramente derechista". Obviamente el Campanero Miranda no ha leído bien la Carta Pastoral del 17 de Noviembre de 1979.

Una vez que ha definido a su antojo el pensamiento y las intenciones de nuestra jerarquía, pasa a identificarla totalmente con "el enemigo" para poder a su vez atacarla como tal: ("Los señores Obispos de Nicaragua - el Cardenal a la cabeza - está en plena "comunión política" con el Papa polaco que tiene una clara orientación capitalista. . . Tanto el Papa como el Cardenal y los Obispos coinciden en cuanto a su ideología política con la Administración Reagan y con la "contra".

A continuación le atribuye acciones ajenas: "Hay un sector del catolicismo identificado con la causa de los pobres. Pero estos son atacados por los otros llamándoles despectivamente "Iglesia Popular. . ." Amigo Miranda, el nombre de "Iglesia Popular" fue inventado por sus propios iniciadores. En nuestra opinión no es popular en ninguno de sus sentidos.

Logrado su propósito, pasa ahora a justificar la rebeldía, (verdadero propósito de la Serpiente). Su afirmación sin embargo deriva en el cinismo: "Los curas revolucionarios dicen - con toda razón - que estar en comunión con los Obispos y con el Papa no es identificarse con las opciones políticas de estos. Es decir que en cuanto a la fe, los dogmas, LA DISCIPLINA CANONICA etc. están en comunión".

Aquí se le pasó la mano al amigo Miranda. La "Iglesia Popular" no ha sido condenada por sus opciones políticas, sino por sus verdaderas herejías, por su manipulación tendenciosa de las Escrituras, por sus abusos litúrgicos etc. Y algunos de sus principales exponentes en el país no está ya en comunión con la Iglesia porque fueron suspendidos de su Ministerio Sacerdotal y/o retirados de su Orden Religiosa precisamente por su franca rebeldía a la disciplina canónica.

Quizás el pueblo sencillo no es siempre capaz de discernir las sutiles manipulaciones de estos expertos entrenados en distorcionar las mentes de las personas, pero es siempre capaz de identificar a los suyos. a sus verdaderos Pastores. Por eso es que por donde pasa el Cardenal el pueblo entero se vuelca para recibirlo y para manifestarle su fe en Jesucristo y su fidelidad a la Iglesia.

Y esta es una verdad que nadie puede negar, aunque luego el Nuevo Diario, burlándose del mismo pueblo a quien dice servir, publique artículos como el del 28 de septiembre pasado ("Vaticinan Sobre el Próximo Papa") en donde pretendiendo hacer chacota del Cardenal se ríe en realidad de las expresiones de afecto y lealtad de un pueblo humilde que pese a quien pese, y a pesar del Nuevo Diario, seguirá siendo cristiano y fiel al Papa, a sus Obispos y devoto de María, Madre de Dios y de todos nosotros, pecadores.

Reclama derecho a evangelizar

R. Católica protesta al MINT

Los miembros de la Dirección y personal de RADIO CATOLICA DE NICARAGUA, han dirigido la siguiente carta al Ministro del Interior, denunciando los graves abusos cometidos por la Dirección de Medios de Comunicación Social:

Managua, 28 de Sept. 1985.

Cdte. de la Revolución
Tomás Borge
Ministro del Interior
Managua
Señor Ministro:

Los suscritos miembros de la Dirección y Personal de Radio Católica de Nicaragua, emisora de la Iglesia, por este medio queremos hacer nuestra formal protesta por los hechos acaecidos recientemente en nuestro centro de trabajo, provocados por la Dirección de Medios de Comunicación Social que está bajo su jurisdicción.

Los hechos acaecidos son los siguientes:

El miércoles 25, a las 6:30 a.m., se nos prohibió telefónicamente la transmisión diferida de la misa que el Señor Cardenal había celebrado en Matagalpa en la festividad de Nuestra Señora de la Merced.

El mismo miércoles a las 7 a.m., se dió el allanamiento de nuestros estudios por obra de dos Oficiales armados, quienes abusivamente "mano militar" interrumpieron la transmisión de la homilía que el Señor Cardenal pronunció en Matagalpa, sin presentar documento legal que respaldara esa decisión, lo que nos hizo recordar lo que sufrimos en el pasado.

Nos preocupan Señor Ministro estos hechos, de los cuales es reincidente la Dirección de Medios, ya que el 13 de Septiembre, nuestro Director protestó por hechos semejantes en carta a la Directora Nelba Blandón.

Nos preocupa Señor Ministro, porque entendemos que ha habido gestión al más alto nivel, y Ud., ha garantizado respetar el derecho que asiste a la Radio de la Iglesia de cumplir con su misión evangelizadora.

Nos llena de profunda preocupación el hecho de que la Directora de Medios de Comunicación haya notificado vía telefónica, que la Santa Misa será censurada para poderse transmitir en forma diferida.

Lo anterior es una violación a la libertad de culto y de expresión, y entra en contradicción con lo expresado por Ud., al Señor Cardenal de que no sería censurada la Santa Misa.

Nosotros le exigimos que se respete el derecho y la libertad de la Iglesia de poder evangelizar a través de nuestra Radio y esperamos una pronta respuesta.

Atentamente
Mons. Bismarck Carballo
Director

Gloria Benavides, y siguen más firmas. . .

c.c: Emmo. Señor Cardenal Arzobispo de Managua.
Conferencia Episcopal
Nunciatura Apostólica
Embajada de Países de Contadora
Dirección de Medios, MINT
Medios de Comunicación
Archivo.

Militares la allanaron

MINT pone bozal a R. Católica

Militares armados de la Dirección de Medios de Comunicación del Ministerio del Interior, irrumpieron violentamente el pasado 12 de Septiembre en los estudios de Radio Católica, para suspender la transmisión de una Eucaristía celebrada ese mismo día en la ciudad de Boaco por el Cardenal Obando.

Según declaraciones dadas a "IGLESIA" por Monseñor Bismarck Carballo, Director de esa radio, los dos oficiales vestidos de militar y pistolas al cinto penetraron por la fuerza ese día hasta las cabinas de transmisión de dicha emisora, y obligaron a los controlistas y locutores a que suspendieran la Santa Misa que en ese momento se encontraba en el aire.

Previo a esa intervención militar en la radio oficial de la Iglesia nicaragüense, Medios de Comunicación ese mismo dia había prohibido la transmisión en vivo que de esa misma celebración se estaba ofreciendo desde la ciudad de Boaco.

"Nos preocupa esta situación de hostilidad permanente para la misión evangelizadora de la Iglesia, impidiéndole cumplir con su misión esencial", dice Monseñor Carballo en una carta de protesta que posteriormente envió a la Capitán Nelba Cecilia Blandón, Directora de Medios de Comunicación.

Carballo dijo también en dicha carta que: "le agradeceríamos de una vez por todas ser consecuente con lo que dicen sus dirigentes (de la revolución sandinista) a las delegaciones extranjeras afirmando que aquí no está prohibido transmitir la Misa, ni se impide la libertad de culto".

Lecturas bíblicas de la quincena

DOM. 13 OCT 28 ORDINARIO
Sab. 7, 7 - 11; Sal. 89;
Heb. 4, 12 - 13; Mc. 10, 17 - 30.

LUN. 14 Sn. Calixto. Papa y Mr. (M.L.).
Rom. 1, 1 - 7 / Sal. 97/ Lc. 11, 29 - 32.

MAR. 15. Teresa de Jesús. vg. y dra. (MO).
Eclo. 15, 1 - 6 / Sal. 88 / Mt. 11, 25 - 30.

MIER. 16. Sta. Eduviges, rel y Margarita M. de Alacoque vg. (ML). Rom. 2, 1 - 11 / Sal 61 / Lc. 11, 42 -46.

JUEV. 17. San Ignacio de Antioquía ob. y mr. (MO). Rom 3, 21-30a / Sal 129 Lc. 11, 47 - 54.

VIER 18. San Lucas, Evangelista (F)
2 Tim 4, 9 - 17 a /Sal 144 Lc 10, 1 - 12. 17 -20.

SAB 19, Pedro de Alcántara, Pbro. Pablo de la Cruz, Pbro. (ML).
Rom 4, 13. 16 - 18/Sal 104 Lc. 12, 8 -12.

DOM. 20 29 DOMINGO ORDINARIO
Is 53, 10 -11/ Sal 32 / Heb. 4, 14 - 16/ Mc. 10. 35 - 45.

LUN 21. Rom 4, 20 -25 / Lc. 12, 13 - 21

MAR 22 Rom. 5, 12 y 15 - 21; Sal 39 / Lc. 12, 35 - 38.

MIER 23 Sn. Juan de Capistrano, pbro. (ML)
Rom 6, 12 -18 / Sal 123 / Lc. 12, 39 - 48.

JUEV. 24 Sn. Antonio Ma. Claret. Ob. (ML)
Rom 6, 19 - 23 / Sal 1 / Lc. 12 49 - 53.

VIER. 25 Rom. 7, 18 - 25 a / Sal. 118 / Lc. 12, 54 - 59.

SAB 26 Rom. 8, 1 - 11/ Sal 23 / Lc. 13, 1- 9

ABREVIATURAS: MO. Memoria Obligatoria
ML. Memoria Libre
F. Feria
vg. virgen
DRA. Doctora
MR. MARTIR

"La Paciencia todo lo alcanza"
(Teresa de Jesús)

Del 13 al 20

Semana de la Familia

CARTA CIRCULAR

A nuestros sacerdotes, religiosos, religiosas y fieles de la Arquidiócesis de Managua, con motivo de la celebración de la Semana de la Familia.

Como todos los años, la Comisión Arquidiocesana de Pastoral Familiar ha organizado la SEMANA DE LA FAMILIA, la que se celebrará del 13 al 20 de Octubre próximo, con el lema:

"LA FAMILIA: PRIMERA COMUNIDAD EDUCADORA"

y alrededor de tres temas principales:
"LA FAMILIA: ESCUELA DE HUMANIDAD"
"LA FAMILIA: FORMADORA EN EN LA FE"
"LA FAMILIA: FORJADORA DE LA SOCIEDAD"

Constituyendo la familia, por designio divino, la célula vital de la sociedad, sin la cual no puede existir, debemos darle a este acontecimiento una especial importancia.

Ya en la carta pastoral "JESUCRISTO Y LA UNIDAD DE LA IGLESIA EN NICARAGUA", que todos los Obispos dirijimos al pueblo nicaragüense en Octubre de 1980, expresamos: "Solamente logrando que nuestros hogares sean las primeras escuelas de la educación en la fe y solamente si se conservan unidas y estables por el amor, será posible que la Iglesia cumpla su gran misión en la sociedad y con la misma Iglesia".

Exhortamos a todos los agentes de pastoral a fin de que en cada parroquia y en cada comunidad familiar, ambos núcleos básicos de nuestra Santa Iglesia, se organicen jornadas de oración y reflexión en torno a los temas propuestos, participando también activamente en los actos y celebraciones que se lleven a cabo durante el desarrollo de esta Semana de la Familia.

En esta ocasión, también les pedimos a todos que unidos en sus parroquias, en sus colegios, en sus comunidades y grupos y especialmente en sus familias, recen y mediten durante todos los días del mes de Octubre, el Santo Rosario, con el propósito de obtener de nuestra Venerada Virgen María, esa paz y esa reconciliación, que tanto anhelamos sus hijos los nicaragüenses.

Que Nuestro Señor Jesucristo y Nuestra Madre María Santísima, nos ayuden a construir la paz y nos llenen de consuelo, alegría y fortaleza.

Léase y publíquese en la forma acostumbrada.

Dado en la Curia del Arzobispado, Managua, 27 de Septiembre de 1985.

Miguel CARD. Obando Bravo
Arzobispo de Managua

PUBLICACION

DE LA

ARQUIDIOCESIS

DE MANAGUA

Cardenal Obando acl

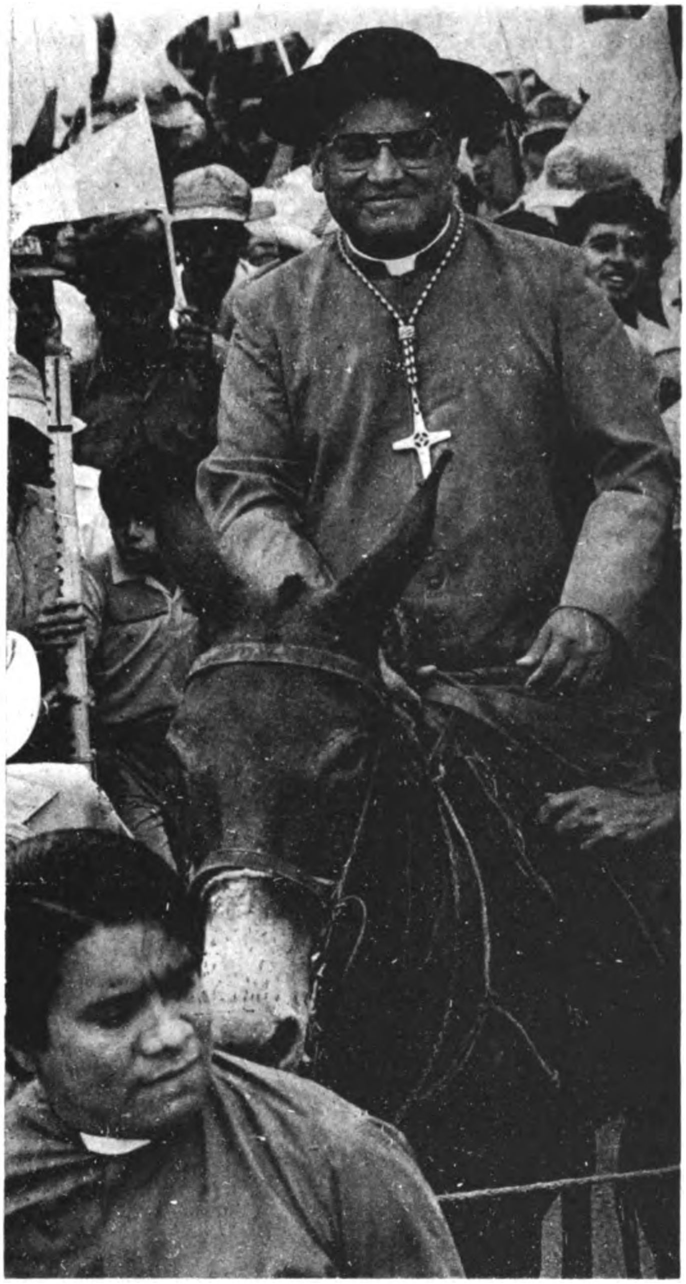
Un llamado a la Reconciliación Nacional, al Diálogo, y la pacificación de los corazones para encontrar la ansiada paz de los nicaragüenses, es como se puede resumir el mensaje que Su Eminencia el Cardenal Miguel Obando y Bravo ha dado a los nicaragüenses en todas las visitas que ha hecho por varios puntos del país

Cumpliendo una fuerte y apretada agenda que solo con su fortaleza física y espiritual la puede estar llevando a cabo, el Arzobispo ha visitado varios lugares en donde por enormes multitudes y con convencional alegría los fieles católicos y de otras sectas lo han recibido.

El Cardenal Obando está cumpliendo sus visitas de Norte a Sur y de Este a Oeste, para predicar el amor, la justicia, y la libertad, pilares en los que según él debe estar también basada la paz, además de la reconciliación.

Los que a diario calumnian a la Iglesia y a sus Obispos, han sido los únicos que no han quedado complacidos con el arrastre popular que a donde ha ido ha tenido, y han tratado de limitarlo a sus oficios religiosos, y no reconocerle su voz de los que no tienen voz.

La composición fotográfica que a continuación presentamos no puede ser más elocuente de lo que en realidad ha significado la presencia del Cardenal para los nicaragüenses.



– Cardenal Obando, cabalgando una mula a su entrada en Jinotega.

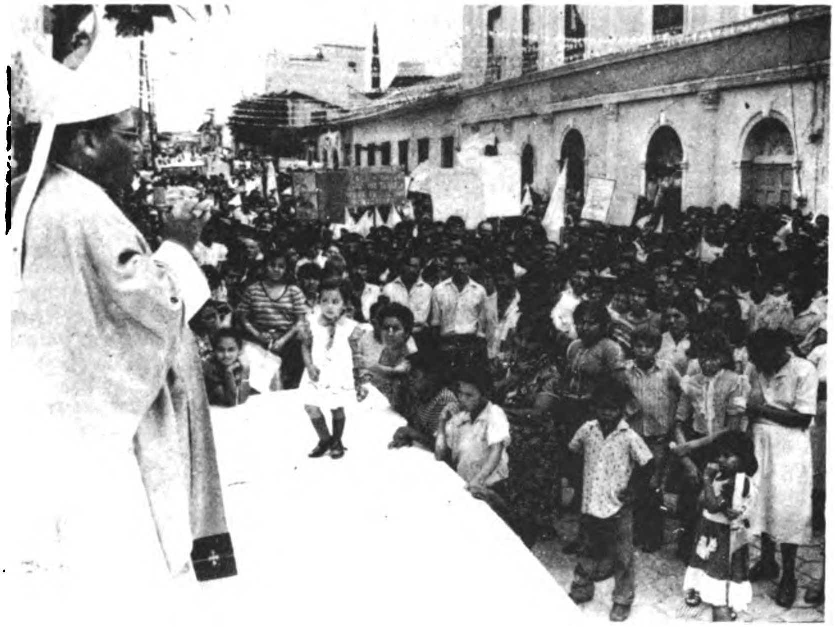
– Misa Campal celebrada por el Cardenal Obando, a

– Obando y Bravo en la ciudad de Granada.

– El Pastor de los nicaragüenses en su [illegible] en Jino

mado en todo el país

regreso de Roma, el 15 de Julio de 1985, en el Centro Juvenil Don Bosco, de Managua.



– El Cardenal en Boaco.

epe.

– Esta es parte de la multitud de jinoteganos que asistieron a darle la bienvenida al Cardenal.

Por reclutamiento SMP

Clero granadino protesta

A presiones y humillaciones son sometidos los seminaristas que arbitrariamente fueron llevados al Servicio Militar. Sobre el particular el Clero del Departamento de Rivas ha enviado la siguiente comunicación al Excmo. Mons. Pablo Vega M., Obispo -Prelado de Juigalpa.

GRANADA / OCT/85

Excmo. Sr.
Mons. Pablo Vega M.
Obispo - Prelado de Juigalpa
Su Despacho. Managua, D. N.

Excelencia Reverendísima:

Como ya es del conocimiento de la CEN, seis seminaristas del Seminario Menor de Granada, con residencia en San Jorge, fueron llevados arbitrariamente al Servicio Militar y trasladados a la base del S. M. P. en Ocotal, donde están siendo vejados por su condición de seminaristas.

Hemos agotado todos los recursos de diálogo que han estado a nuestro alcance, para obtener su libertad, y sólo promesas de las autoridades, a las que hemos recurrido, hemos obtenido.

El Clero Diocesano de Granada, le pide a la CEN aclarar con el Presidente de la República el valor que tiene su palabra, comprometida con la CEN de no movilizar al Servicio Militar a los estudiantes de nuestros Seminarios Mayor y Menores; y tomar una actitud enérgica contra este atropello que conculca los derechos de la Iglesia, y que la CEN nos apoye en las protestas que a nivel Eclesial este Presbiterio piensa realizar como sería "annuento Episcopo" suspender progresivamente el Culto Divino en nuestras Parroquias y quizá contar con el apoyo de las otras parroquias comprendidas en lo que se conoce actualmente como la IV Región.

Le comunicamos que el Clero del Dpto. de Rivas fue a visitar el Domingo próximo pasado, a los seminaristas en Ocotal, lo que motivó la suspensión del Culto Dominical, provocando una reacción solidaria del Pueblo Fiel.

Sin más a que referirnos y, deseando a Su Excelencia Reverendísima y a sus hermanos en el Episcopado la gracia y la paz de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, nos suscribimos filialmente José de J. Hernández (Párroco de Potosí); Raúl Hernández (Párroco de Belén); Juan Fco. Cuadra (Párroco de Altagracia); Miguel Angulo (Párroco de Diriomo-Diriá); Sergio Hernández (I Vicario de Catedral); Pedro Reyes (Vicario de Teustepe San José); Alfonso Alvarado L. (Párroco de Camoapa); Juan Moreira C.(Párroco de El Socorro - Santa Lucía).

Mons. Francisco García C.
Vicario General
Mons. Rafael Obregón Ilmo. Edgard Santamaría
Arcipreste de Boaco Arcipreste de Rivas

Capturan seminaristas de Río San Juan

Cinco seminaristas menores de la Prelatura de Chontales y Río San Juan, junto con otros dos sacristenes fueron reclutados a la fuerza por militares del S.M.P., el pasado mes de septiembre, denuncio la Iglesia.

El Secretario de la Conferencia Episcopal, Mons. Bosco Vivas Robelo, en declaraciones a "Iglesia", dijo que con estos seminaristas menores ya suman 11 los novicios que han sido capturados por los sandinistas, sin que hasta el momento las autoridades gubernamentales hayan dado esperanzas de liberarlos para que se reintegren a su vida de preparación sacerdotal.

Los cinco seminaristas fueron capturados por militares sandinistas, en su propio seminario ubicado en las cercanías de la ciudad de San Carlos, en el departamento de Río San Juan.

A XX años del Concilio

La Reforma Litúrgica, 20 años después

Del 23 al 28 de Octubre de 1984 tuvo lugar en Roma el I Encuentro Internacional de Liturgia por la S. Congregación para el Culto Divino. Asistieron los presidentes de las Comisiones Episcopales de Liturgia y los secretarios. Había que informar sobre lo que se ha hecho en cada país en estos 20 años de reforma litúrgica. Cada mañana un perito exponía un tema de pastoral litúrgica. Por considerar de importancia la Pastoral Litúrgica en todo el mundo en estos 20 años, publicaremos por partes, el panorama que presentó Gastón Fontaine de la Sacrosantum Concilium a partir de las respuestas a ocho puntos de la encuesta presentada por la Sagrada Congregación para el Culto Divino a las Comisiones Episcopales de Liturgia.

LA REFORMA LITURGICA 20 AÑOS DESPUES

La Constitución Conciliar sobre la liturgia "Sacrosanctum Concilium", ha dado derecho definitivo de ciudadanía a la parte de la pastoral que mira a la liturgia. Todo lo que el Concilio decreta a este propósito, concerniente a la Eucaristía, los otros sacramentos, el oficio divino, el año litúrgico, etc., tiene por fin expresamente "favorecer más todavía esta pastoral litúrgica" (art. 43). La pastoral litúrgica tiene, pues, por finalidad hacer participar activa y conscientemente al pueblo cristiano en la celebración del culto, para beber en su fuente, como lo decía ya San Pío X en 1911, el verdadero espíritu cristiano.

La encuesta presentada a las Comisiones Episcopales de Liturgia de todo el mundo en abril pasado por la S. Congregación para el Culto Divino quiso suscitar la reflexión sobre todo este conjunto. El número y la calidad de las respuestas recibidas manifiestan bien que esto se tomó en serio y que se ha querido responder con franqueza. Sobre cada uno de los puntos de la encuesta no ha faltado:

—presentar los elementos positivos de la situación,
—notar las deficiencias y las lagunas,
—proponer los elementos de solución o de mejora.

I. LOS PROBLEMAS CONCRETOS DE LA PASTORAL LITURGICA HOY

1. El conjunto del mundo católico acogió con alegría, hace 20 años, la reforma litúrgica pedida por el Concilio Vaticano II. Pero esta reforma exigía más que una simple revisión o la reforma de los libros litúrgicos y de los ritos; suponía una verdadera transformación de las mentalidades, una nueva visión teológica de la liturgia, una nueva manera de celebrar. Todo un *tratado de información y de formación* para el clero y el pueblo cristiano se imponía, trabajo que por otra parte no se ha terminado, aun cuando los nuevos libros litúrgicos han sido publicados en las lenguas populares.

2. En este campo, si se reconoce con gusto lo que se ha hecho, se es sensible, sobre todo, a las *lagunas y a las insuficiencias.* Muy a menudo, se redujo todo a anunciar los cambios de ritos o de textos sin dar suficientemente su sentido. *Lo que más ha faltado ha sido la inteligencia profunda de la reforma litúrgica.*

3. Unas veinte respuestas reconocen que la *falta de formación del clero* en este campo constituye una de las dificultades mayores de la pastoral litúrgica. Se ha notado que en buen número de casas de formación del clero diocesano y religioso descuidan y aun ignoran la enseñanza de la liturgia (teología, historia, pastoral). Los sacerdotes celebrantes conservan muy a menudo sus antiguas costumbres (juridicismo, ritualismo, rubricismo); ignoran, la mayor parte de las veces, el sentido de los ritos tal como están descritos en la *Institutio generalis Missalis Romani,* y en los *Praenotanda* de los diversos rituales; les hace falta habitualmente la formación más elemental en la técnica de presidir, tal como lo requiere la liturgia reformada.

4. En consecuencia de todo esto, *el pueblo cristiano no ha recibido la formación litúrgica* que le es necesaria para tomar una parte activa y consciente en la celebración.

5. Se ha notado también, en este contexto general, la ausencia o la poca eficacia de los *centros nacionales,* la mayor parte de las veces faltos de personal cualificado o exclusivamente consagrado a este trabajo; a veces, falta de recursos materiales. También hace falta à menudo un plan global de pastoral litúrgica y de intercambio de experiencias entre las *Comisiones Diocesanas de Liturgia.* Estas últimas, por otra parte, no existen muchas veces sino de nombre. A muchos obispos les falta totalmente el "liderazgo" en el campo litúrgico y las catedrales son muy raramente modelos de celebración.

6. Numerosas comunicaciones abordan los problemas concretos concernientes a *la preparación y a la organización de las celebraciones sacramentales, y sobre todo de la Eucaristía:*

PASA A LA PAGINA 7

Un Nuevo .....

A la luz del evangelio se unen la raza española de ojos hermosos y tez trigueña que ya se ha mezclado con el moro en andalucía y la india bonita color de arena lavada de cuya unión surgirá el mestizaje de América Latina. La conquista se transformará en entrega, y en relaciones de familia, cuando el sacramento del matrimonio bendijo las uniones.

También se abrazan bajo la sombra de la cruz, la cultura española, más fuerte y ya bautizada, vivida fanáticamente por aquellos primeros soldados que llevaban una cruz en la empuñadura de su espada, y la cultura nativa, todavía pagana pero con valores comunitarios, costumbres y modos suaves y educados que han prevalecido para distinguirnos a los latinoamericanos.

En lo económico, se abrazan el maíz, la papa, el cacao, la llama y el guanaco que sirven de fuerza de trabajo con la vid y el trigo, la vaca y el caballo para enriquecer la dieta y multiplicar la producción de los valles y las montañas de América, y junto a las pirámides que todavía asombran al mundo comienzan a construirse las plazas mayores con sus ayuntamientos y catedrales, dándole una nueva imagen a lo que se comenzó a llamar Nuevo Mundo.

Y también se abrazaron las lenguas, permaneciendo las más fuertes como el quichua,el cachiquel y el maya hasta nuestros días, encargándose la Iglesia de escribir los diccionarios y las gramáticas y de evangelizar a cada indio en su propia lengua, pero también de enseñar el español y el portugués a todos, dándonos así uno de los vínculos más fuertes de unidad que existen en Latinoamérica.

Todos estos abrazos fueron posibles, por la religión cristiana que enseña el amor entre los hombres y el respeto a la vida y a la dignidad del hombre y que sabe ver en todas las criaturas, la mano de Dios que ha dejado en ellas pequeños rasgos de su infinita belleza, sabiduría y bondad.

Para continuar esa ingente tarea de evangelización, la Arquidiócesis de Managua, ha comenzado a circular el día de hoy un nuevo periódico: IGLESIA, que llevará a cada hogar nicaragüense cristiano las noticias del mundo católico, las principales declaraciones y pronunciamientos del Papa y de nuestro Cardenal, la doctrina y la enseñanza correcta sobre los cuales está fundada nuestra Iglesia, las defensas de la fe y la fidelidad a la Iglesia y todo aquello que más necesita el católico en el momento que vivimos y para desarrollar la vida comunitaria, litúrgica y religiosa.

Sea pues bien venido el periódico quincenal IGLESIA a nuestros hogares, sitios de trabajo e instituciones, como un nuevo instrumento de evangelización que ayude a nuestro Cardenal Miguel Obando Bravo a nuestro Obispo Auxiliar Bosco, a nuestros Sacerdotes y Laicos en su labor de evangelización. Que como uno de los miles de campanarios que los frailes y los hermanos y los sacerdotes y los canónicos y los obispos y laicos levantaron en el suelo de América Latina durante los últimos quinientos años para alabar, servir y reverenciar a Dios Nuestro Señor, IGLESIA llegue a cada nicaragüense como el tintineo alegre de las campanas que invitan a dejar lo que se está haciendo para atender el llamado del Señor.

GLORIA A DIOS

Cardenal Obando.............

Cardenal Miguel Obando Bravo, Arzobispo de Managua.

Educación, Juventud, Vocaciones y Ministerios: Mons. Leovigildo López F., Obispo de Granada.

Pastoral Social y Cáritas: Mons. Julián Barni, Obispo de León.

Laicos, Movimientos de Apostolado Laical y Familia: Mons. Pablo A. Vega, Obispo de Juigalpa.

Religiosos: Mons. Carlos Santi, Obispo de Matagalpa.

Pastoral Rural: Mons. Pedro Lisímaco Vílchez, Obispo de Jinotega.

Misiones, Ecumenismo y No Creyentes: Mons. Salvador Schlaefer, Obispo de Bluefields.

Delegado Episcopal para el Seminario: Mons. Julian Barni, Obispo de León.

Doctrina de la Fe: Mons. Rubén López Ardón, Obispo de Estelí.

Delegado y Sustituto al CELAM:

Delegado: Mons. Leovigildo López Fitoria, Obispo de Granada.

Sustituto: Mons. Pablo Schmitz, Obispo Auxiliar de Bluefields.

CONFERENCIA EPISCOPAL DE
NICARAGUA

Managua, 3 de Octubre de 1985.

Cardenal Llevó ....

les, Mons. Bismarck Carballo y Mons. Leopoldo Brenes, así como por una comitiva de unas 20 personas.

Con el fin de llevar el mensaje de la Buena Nueva y predicar la paz, la justicia, y la libertad, a todos los nicaragüenses, el Cardenal no ha hechado pies atrás a ninguno de los caminos que se haya encontrado, por muy escabrosos que éstos sean, y en las circunstancias que sean.

"Cardenal Obando, siga levantando la voz de la paz, con el valor con que siempre lo ha hecho", dijo uno de los laicos blufileños a nuestro querido pastor.

En su estancia en Bluefields, después de recorrer cienes de Kilómetros tanto en vehículo como por el agua, el religioso recordó al unido pueblo costeño, que deberían pacificar sus corazones, para así poder construir la paz anhelada entre toda la sociedad de Nicaragua.

El Cardenal regresó de la Costa Atlántica al día siguiente de haber llegado, llegando a Managua cerca de la medianoche del pasado domingo.

Obispos Denuncian ....

S. M. P. como se le expresó en dos cartas anteriores, en las últimas horas, Sacerdotes que cumplen su misión eclesial en la Arquidiócesis de Managua y en la Diócesis de Granada, algunos de ellos desde hace muchos años, fueron intempestivamente citados por funcionarios de Migración, lo que nos hace pensar en la situación vivida con motivo de la expulsión de los últimos diez sacerdotes, en julio de 1984.

Estos hechos son considerados por los Obispos como una forma de intimidar a la Iglesia, lo que en vez de aminorar las tensiones más bien las acrecientan y hacen más difíciles las conversaciones Iglesia-Estado.

Los Obispos consecuentes con su Misión de Ministros de la Reconciliación manifiestan una vez más su voluntad de continuar sus conversaciones con el Gobierno y esperan que estos problemas planteados sean resueltos favorablemente.

Mons. Bosco Vivas Robelo
Secretario de la Conferencia
Episcopal de Nicaragua

Se anuncia Congreso..........

las autoridades de la Iglesia nicaragüense, sino con el apoyo y entusiasmo de los laicos.

La comisión nombrada por el Cardenal Obando, está presidida por el Obispo Auxiliar, Monseñor Bosco Vivas Robelo, y compuesta por los Vicarios Episcopales, Monseñor Guillermo Quintanilla, Mons. Bismarck Carballo, Mons. Leopoldo Brenes y además de otros sacerdotes y laicos.

La Reforma ....

—La disposición de los lugares litúrgicos ha sido hecha, la mayoría de las veces, de una manera apresurada; el altar, la sede presidencial, el ambón han sido a menudo tenidos en cuenta, pero el bautisterio y el lugar de la celebración de la Penitencia han sido descuidados casi dondequiera.

—En numerosos países se ha hecho un gran trabajo de calidad para la creación de cantos litúrgicos en lenguas vivas. Se constatan, sin embargo, dos dificultades: la mediocridad de un cierto número de producciones musicales y la invasión del canto (y de la palabra) en detrimento del silencio.

—Se piden abundantemente gestos y signos verdaderos, significativos, bellos, bien hechos.

(Continúa en próximo número).

Dice el Cardenal:

Iglesia, canal de buena nueva

¿Cuál es, Eminencia, su comentario sobre la edición de este nuevo periódico eclesial?

— Yo pienso que el periódico IGLESIA, será un canal más para llevar la buena nueva de Cristo muerto y resucitado a nuestros feligreses. Siempre he pensado que los medios de comunicación social juegan un papel importante en la evangelización. Sabemos que hoy día la prensa, la radio, el cine y la televisión, son para la gran masa del pueblo como el aire que respiramos, el agua que bebemos, el sol que nos alumbra, y el pan que comemos. Es decir, el alimento espiritual, religioso, cultural y artístico para el pueblo, el día de hoy, está pendiente de los medios de comunicación.

Yo espero que las personas que van a trabajar en la elaboración de este periódico que lleva el nombre de IGLESIA, serán personas objetivas y que se servirán de este medio para dar la buena nueva a nuestros lectores.

¿Cuál es su análisis de la convivencia entre la Iglesia y el Estado?

— No podemos negar que ha habido roces entre la Iglesia y el Estado. La Iglesia, sin embargo, cree que a través del diálogo deben solucionarse los problemas y la Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua ha nombrado una comisión que está compuesta de dos Obispos para que mantengan conversaciones con una comisión del Gobierno. Hay que reconocer que a pesar de las conversaciones nuestros misioneros siguen siendo hostigados.

El Capitán Mejía dijo en estos días a unos misioneros que trabajan con tanto entusiasmo aquí en Nicaragua, lo siguiente:

Que sabía que los religiosos extranjeros aprovechándose de su ministerio como sacerdotes se inmiscuyen en los asuntos internos de Nicaragua, que son exclusivo derecho de los nicaragüenses, que sabían ellos, quienes eran esos sacerdotes, pero que hasta la fecha, ellos, habían sido tolerantes con actitudes, abusos y delitos.

Que desde ya, a partir de esta reunión en adelante, tomarían medidas drásticas, dolorosas, pero necesarias, contra los que son delincuentes ante las leyes de la Nación, contra la seguridad, bienestar y paz de la familia nicaragüense.

Que conocen también a los religiosos extranjeros que abusan del derecho de predicar la doctrina católica que les ha dado el pueblo nicaragüense al venir a Nicaragua (increíble pero cierto).

Esta reunión para avisarles, será la última medida de tolerancia que el Gobierno y pueblo nicaragüense conceden a los mencionados sacerdotes. Hizo una alusión a diez sacerdotes expulsados por la intromisión en la política nicaragüense.

Esos puntos que he citado fueron repetidos varias veces como si fueran un disco de larga duración. Jamás se apeó de ellos.

Cuando se le pidió que concretara abusos y actitudes y delitos, se limitó a decir que en ciertas parroquias, no dijo en donde, se había atacado al servicio militar y se había criticado la situación económica del país.

En toda la exposición no mencionó ni hizo referencia alguna al caso de los seis seminaristas llevados al reclutamiento militar. Tampoco se refirió al pronunciamiento del Obispo de Granada sobre los seis seminaristas reclutados, que fue leído el domingo 29 de Septiembre.

Pero dejó como corolario y conclusiones:

1. Todo sacerdote extranjero puede ser expulsado del país sin explicación alguna.

2. Cualquier medida que el sacerdote extranjero adopte en cumplimiento de ordenes superiores eclesiásticas es considerada política interna, si esa medida es contraria o desagrada -como provocación- al gobierno sandinista.

3. Amenazó con la expulsión del país a los sacerdotes extranjeros.

Denuncia Obispo L. Fitoria

Otros seminaristas reclutados

El Obispo y Clero de la Diócesis de Granada por medio de un pronunciamiento dirigido a los fieles católicos, al tiempo que denunció el reclutamiento de 6 de sus seminaristas y de exigir "una debida libertad" para evangelizar, danunció estar sufriendo una persecución por quienes se imponen a la Iglesia tratando de condicionar la evangelización para sus intereses partidarios y la coyuntura de poder.

La nota fechada el pasado 24 de Septiembre de este año, y firmada por Monseñor Leovigildo López Fitoria, con relación a los seminaristas capturados, dice recurrir a la promesa del Presidente del Gobierno sandinista que hizo a la Iglesia, en las conversaciones que se mantienen, de que las autoridades del Servicio Militar no reclutarían a los seminaristas aspirantes al Sacerdocio.

El mensaje dirigido a los fieles dice pedir oraciones para que los seminaristas menores, capturados en San Jorge y Popoyuapa, departamento de Rivas, y que hoy se encuentran en un campo de concentración en Ocotal, sean puestos en libertad.

Comunicado de Conferencia Episcopal

La Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua, comunica a sus Sacerdotes y fieles lo siguiente:

Los días 1o. al 3 del presente, se reunió en la Casa de la misma Conferencia, con el fín de evaluar el trabajo realizado durante el presente año. Dentro de esta evaluación se reflexionó profunda y ampliamente, a la luz del Evangelio, sobre la realidad que vive el País y la Iglesia.

Se procedió además a la elección de la nueva Directiva de la Conferencia Episcopal y Responsables de Departamentos y Comisiones Episcopales.

La Conferencia Episcopal, en fecha dos de octubre, envió un telegrama al Señor Presidente de la República, Comandante Daniel Ortega Saavedra, para expresarle su inquietud a causa del problema planteado y aún sin resolver, por el reclutamiento de once seminaristas menores al S.M.P. y por la intempestiva cita hecha por funcionarios de Migración a sacerdotes que cumplen su misión eclesial en la Arquidiócesis de Managua y en la Diócesis de Granada.

Consecuentes con su misión de Ministros de la Reconciliación, los Obispos manifestaron una vez más, al Señor Presidente de la República, su voluntad de continuar sus conversaciones con el Gobierno, haciendo votos para que los problemas planteados sean resueltos pronta y favorablemente.

La Conferencia Episcopal, comunica con gozo, a todo el pueblo católico, su decisión de carácter pastoral, de celebrar un Congreso Eucarístico a nivel nacional, a fines del Año Litúrgico 1986.

Los Obispos de la Conferencia Episcopal exhortan a todo el pueblo católico a unirse en oración, y por intercesión de María, en este mes dedicado al Santo Rosario, rogar al Príncipe de la Paz, derrame sus bendiciones sobre nuestra Patria y nos conceda pronto ese inapreciable Don que tanto necesitamos los nicaragüenses.

Conferencia Episcopal de Nicaragua.
Dado en Managua, a los tres días del mes de Octubre de mil novecientos ochenta y cinco.

Doy Fe
Mons. Bosco Vivas Robelo
Obispo Auxiliar de Managua
Secretario de la C. E. N.

TELEGRAMA

**Internacional
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**ETATPRIORITE
Señor Cardenal Miguel Obando Bravo
Arzobispado
MANAGUA SUC Mt.**

**Al celebrar su fiesta onomastica reciba Señor Cardenal mi cordial felicitación acompañada de plegarias para que sea siempre muy fructífera su accion pastoral y como prueba de benevolencia le otorgo una especial bendición apostólica.
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Annex 8

The Situation of the Protestant Church

Protestant churches in Nicaragua lack the large number of followers, the centralized authority, and the traditional standing in society of the Catholic Church. Like the Catholic Church, however, many of these Protestant churches have suffered severely from Sandinista persecution and divisionist tactics. The National Council of Evangelical Pastors (CNPEN) is the umbrella organization for Protestant churches. Its Sandinista counterpart is the Evangelical Committee for Aid to Development (CEPAD)—a well-funded Protestant relief agency that claims to speak for all Nicaraguan Protestants.

The first document outlines some of the problems CNPEN has encountered with the Sandinista government and with CEPAD. The paper was prepared by the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD), a private American association of well-known religious scholars and workers. Immediately after publication of this document in the United States, the IRD was assailed in the Sandinista press as an agent of U.S. imperialism and the CIA. CNPEN ministers were summoned to government offices and warned that anyone who supplied information to foreigners who subsequently criticized the government or CEPAD would be considered ''counterrevolutionaries'' and ''enemies of the state.'' The government demanded that CNPEN make a public statement disclaiming the positions presented in the IRD paper, particularly that problems existed between it and CEPAD.

Persecution of CNPEN ministers intensified during the October 1985 crackdown that accompanied the expanded State of Emergency. The second document is a *United Methodist Reporter* article on the October roundup of CNPEN ministers. A significant portion of the interrogations of many of the detained CNPEN ministers dealt with their opposition to CEPAD; in some cases, the government interrogators forced CNPEN ministers, as a condition for release, to sign prepared statements that they actually supported CEPAD's work.

The final document is the testimony of one of the CNPEN ministers who was detained in the October roundup and who subsequently fled into exile.

BRIEFING PAPER

THE INSTITUTE ON RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY

January 1985 No. 5

WHO SPEAKS FOR NICARAGUA'S EVANGELICALS?

an interview with

Kate Rafferty of Open Doors

The largest recipient of U.S. church support in Nicaragua is the Evangelical Committee for Aid to Development, better known by its acronym CEPAD. CEPAD maintains an extensive relief and development program and claims to represent Nicaragua's Protestant churches. Spokesmen for CEPAD have toured the United States and Western Europe, usually sponsored by the same church groups that fund their organization.

But there is another Nicaraguan Protestant body, the National Council of Evangelical Pastors (CNPEN). The CNPEN receives no funds or even notice from U.S. mainline church agencies. U.S. church funding for CEPAD has become a matter of considerable controversy in this country due to that organization's support for the Marxist-Leninist Sandinista Front. The CNPEN, however, is clearly independent of the Nicaraguan ruling party. Unfortunately, while CEPAD spokesmen may travel freely and often to the U.S. and Western Europe to defend the Sandinista government, the CNPEN is little known, because it is difficult for its leaders to speak outside of Nicaragua.

Among the CNPEN's problems is the fact that it is illegal for Nicaraguans to criticize the Sandinistas while outside the country. In an effort to offset these difficulties, the Institute on Religion and Democracy presents the testimony of Kate Rafferty, an American who has worked closely with the independent evangelical community in Nicaragua.

Kate Rafferty is a journalist and specialist in Latin American religious affairs. She has travelled to Nicaragua on many occasions since the 1979 revolution in behalf of Open Doors and the Open Doors News Service, a Christian organization that specializes in establishing contact with and supporting Christians who are threatened and/or persecuted because of their faith. Her visits have brought her into contact with a broad range of Nicaragua's evangelical leadership as well as many local pastors, lay leaders, and ordinary church members. Many of their views are conveyed through her in this interview. It is a viewpoint not presented by American church agencies.

— **The Editors**

729 15th Street, N.W. . Suite 900 . Washington, DC 20005

IRD: Several religious groups in the United States, from the National Council of Churches to the Evangelicals for Social Action, have presented the Evangelical Committee for Aid to Development (CEPAD) as the spokesman for Nicaraguan Protestants. CEPAD leaders have travelled the United States contending that the majority of their country's Protestants support the Marxist-Leninist Sandinista government. We have found this assertion surprising given reported conflicts between the Sandinistas and several evangelical churches, most notably the Moravian Church predominant among the Miskito Indians of the Atlantic coast. On the basis of your contacts how would you characterize CEPAD's claims?

Rafferty: The evangelicals I have spoken with would reject the whole story. They have been particularly upset by CEPAD's claims to represent most evangelicals. CEPAD was set up as a relief and development group to receive overseas financial support for the work already begun by a group of pastors at the time of the earthquake in 1972. It was never intended to be an ecumenical council which would speak for the churches. CEPAD officials would never claim such a status within Nicaragua. Indeed, three years ago CEPAD sought to establish an organization of pastors, the National Council of Evangelical Pastors of Nicaragua (CNPEN), which would be more representative. However, one year later this group severed its connection with CEPAD because of the latter's increasingly political involvement with the present government.

IRD: But CEPAD claims to represent forty-two denominations in its National Assembly.

Rafferty: That reflects the number of denominations and independent churches which want to participate in CEPAD programs. Naturally they want some of the funds and supplies that CEPAD controls. Many of these denominations disagree with CEPAD's support for the Sandinistas but do not speak out for fear of jeopardizing these benefits. For example, the Assemblies of God, Nicaragua's largest Protestant denomination, participates in CEPAD despite its conflicts with the Sandinistas.

Moreover, half of the denominations that CEPAD lists are really just individual churches that are not officially registered with the authorities. They have a legal existence only through CEPAD. And then, another one-third of the delegates to CEPAD's National Assembly are officials of the organization. Given this picture, you can see that the genuine denominations in CEPAD just don't have the votes.

IRD: But couldn't they still speak out against those CEPAD policies with which they disagree?

Rafferty: Then they would risk being called "contras" and losing access to CEPAD's relief and development supplies. I heard of many cases in which CEPAD would not help pastors who were viewed as insufficiently supportive of the Sandinistas. During the election campaign CEPAD was particularly blatant in threatening to withhold benefits from those who might boycott the elections.

IRD: You referred to the National Council of Evangelical Pastors. I don't recall this organization being mentioned by any of the American church members that have visited Nicaragua. How can this be the case?

Rafferty: That's simple to answer. I have been told repeatedly by leaders of the National Council that not a single American delegation has met with them. This in spite of the fact that CEPAD's leadership is very familiar with the organization.

IRD: How is the National Council of Evangelical Pastors more representative of evangelicals than CEPAD?

Rafferty: Well, first of all, it was established to speak for pastors, whereas CEPAD is supposed to be a service agency. Secondly, the National Council has a verifiable membership of at least 520 pastors from 65 denominations, as well as leaders of evangelistic organizations such as Campus Crusade for Christ. The National Council's president is also the chairman of Nicaragua's largest Protestant denomination, the Assemblies of God.

IRD: What is CEPAD's attitude toward the National Council of Evangelical Pastors?

Rafferty: They view it as a threat to their effort to be the intermediary between Nicaraguan Protestants and foreign churches. CEPAD is also concerned about its role as a mediator with the Sandinista government. Neither they nor the Sandinistas would want a rival claimant to this role to gain international attention. CEPAD has not assisted the National Council in its efforts to obtain a license to operate. Without this license the National Council's activities are involuntarily of a semi-legal nature.

IRD: CEPAD's defenders have claimed that the organization is not pro-Sandinista, but only works with the government in order to carry out its relief and development functions.

Rafferty: Although it is true that under Somoza CEPAD worked with the government, they didn't feel compelled to make statements and publish educational materials lauding the regime, as they are now doing. CEPAD goes way beyond the relationship with the government necessary to carry out relief and development work. CEPAD diverts funds, which American Christians probably assume are used for humanitarian purposes, to political work for the regime. Several pastors I spoke with in Matagalpa province reported that CEPAD donated eleven four-wheel drive vehicles for use by the Sandinista police.

IRD: Would there be any doubt for an ordinary Nicaraguan that CEPAD is pro-Sandinista?

Rafferty: Well, that would be obvious; you wouldn't even need to ask that question. CEPAD's international affairs director, Sixto Ulloa, ran for election on the Sandinista ticket. What you can't understand until you talk with evangelicals outside the CEPAD staff is how much CEPAD's relationship with the Sandinistas has alienated most evangelicals.

IRD: One of our members, who just got back from Nicaragua, said that she found people unresponsive to conversation until she made it clear that she wasn't a sympathizer of the regime.

Rafferty: Right. In my case, Christians would casually ask me if I was with CEPAD. After I said that I wasn't, they were willing to talk. I think that many church people that have visited Nicaragua would be saddened to know that Christians there are inhibited about talking to them because they think all Americans on these tours are "internacionalistas," foreign supporters of the regime.

IRD: The NCC points to this close relationship between CEPAD and the government as an indication that there is more religious freedom under the Sandinistas than was the case with Somoza.

Rafferty: Christians are always "free" to support the regime they live under. The more appropriate question is: are they free to remain independent of the regime or even to criticize it?

I think we have to look at Nicaragua today from the perspective of the broader -- and truer -- definition of religious freedom that includes the freedom of Christians to act on the Gospel. The Sandinistas will accept this view only to the extent that the Gospel is equated with their revolution. When Christians act on a different understanding of the Gospel, their troubles begin. When the Moravian Church defended the Miskitos against the Sandinistas' encroachments, it was repressed. The same is true for the Catholic Church. Its problems with the regime began when they spoke out in behalf of the independent press, free labor groups, and also the Miskitos.

Are the Sandinistas to be given credit for the courage of those who speak out against them? I would say instead that the freedom that exists is not a product of the Sandinistas but a reflection of the bold spirit of freedom that Christ gives in the midst of any situation and a willingness to die for what one believes.

IRD: NCC representatives have said that there is no systematic religious persecution in Nicaragua -- and they emphasize the word systematic. In their view, what happened to the Moravian churches when the Miskitos were repressed is racial, not religious. The attacks on the Catholic church were "political," not religious. Other cases, which seem rather clearly to involve religious persecution such as the seizure of the Pentecostal and Seventh Day Adventist churches in the summer of 1982, were "mistakes." I think you see how their argument goes. What do you think?

Rafferty: Well, the least one can say is that the Sandinistas make a lot of mistakes. The Sandinistas do harass and sometimes arrest Christians who disagree with the regime. But violence is reserved for those who prove intractable. Moreover, the Sandinistas' fear of the United States makes them highly sensitive to international public opinion. For example, the seizure of the churches in the summer of 1982 hurt their image. We won't see that kind of action again unless the Sandinistas become desperate.

What we see now is constant pressure on Christians that do not work with CEPAD or the pro-Sandinista Catholic centers like the Central American Historical Institute. Campus Crusade for Christ has suffered a great deal of harassment, including office break-ins, and the beating of leaders. When Campus Crusade for Christ delivered the evangelistic film JESUS to authorities for the censoring procedure that is required of all media, it was eventually returned to them badly damaged and barely useable. Finally the Sandinistas required that any notice include a statement saying the film is not recommended for minors. There is an official document which proves this and I have seen it.

Christians have had the word "contra" or "theologian of death" or "pharisee" posted next to their house numbers on the walls of the offices of the Sandinista Defense Committees. That is a common way of identifying dissidents. I have photographs. Many pastors have been detained. Of course, the police never say: "We are arresting you because you are a Christian." So I guess the NCC must be extremely conservative, at least when it comes to defining religious persecution.

IRD: Actually a recent NCC report said that the only persecution experienced by evangelicals came from attacks by the anti-Sandinista insurgents, or "contras" as the Sandinistas named them. The NCC report alleges that five Nazarene churches were "lost" because of contra attacks.

Rafferty: I've travelled throughout Nicaragua and spoken with hundreds of pastors and church members, and I've never heard of such an incident. Moreover, according to the National Council of Evangelical Pastors, none of their churches have been attacked by the contras. Actually the Sandinistas tend to think that evangelical churches near the border might help the anti-Sandinista guerrillas. The government has ordered a number of these churches closed.

IRD: One of the examples to which CEPAD people have pointed as evidence of religious freedom was the recent Month of the Bible, in which they claimed to have been involved.

Rafferty: That's an example of the kind of misinformation that frustrates Nicaraguan evangelicals. The Month of the Bible was the result of an effort by the leaders of the National Council of Evangelical Pastors to obtain permission from the Sandinistas for open air evangelistic meetings in September. The authorities rebuffed them saying in effect: "You Christians stay in your churches and read the Bible and pray." The CNPEN then joined with the Bible Society to declare September the "Month of the Bible," in celebration of the 415th anniversary of the translation of the Bible into Spanish.

This event reflected the growing strength of Nicaraguan evangelicals, not the good will of the Sandinistas. The government tried to stop it. When it couldn't, CEPAD tried to gain control but was rejected by evangelicals. CEPAD ended up having its own separate celebration in Ciudad Sandino, the municipality near Managua in which the churches are highly controlled. CEPAD's international affairs director Sixto Ulloa even tried to include a big rally in support of his candidacy on the Sandinista Front ticket. But he couldn't get anybody to come out.

The point is that the Sandinistas failed to stop or control the Month of the Bible. The religious renewal among evangelicals -- and also Catholics -- was unforeseen by the Sandinistas. In certain areas where the churches are growing, the Sandinista Defense Committees which exercise surveillance over the neighborhood barely exist. Nobody wants to have anything to do with them.

IRD: Church staff representatives in the U.S. suggest that the great growth of the Protestant churches in Nicaragua demonstrates that Sandinista rule benefits Protestantism -- whatever its effect on the Catholic Church.

Rafferty: The irony of this position is that a leader of Managua evangelicals with whom I spoke attributed the religious renewal to the difficulty of life in Nicaragua today -- the fear and uncertainty which the regime's policies have created.

IRD: One claim that's made for CEPAD, which touches on the question of religious freedom, is that they gained conscientious objector status for some evangelicals who were in peace churches -- for example, the Mennonites. Do you know anything about that?

Rafferty: CEPAD did issue letters attesting that certain Christians were conscientious objectors and these letters were respected by the military to the extent that these recruits were restricted to base camps. But the number claiming that status grew so much that the Sandinistas no longer recognize the letters. I'm surprised that anyone is still referring to the matter. Many of the evangelicals I talked to were distressed about the draft. They said that their young people were fleeing to the mountains by the hundreds. Now CEPAD says that no one is claiming conscientious objector status because all the Christian young people want to go to war. What CEPAD is doing is telling the young people that they need to go to war, that it is their duty to serve in the Sandinista army.

IRD: How has the regime affected relations between evangelicals and Catholics?

Rafferty: There had been a great deal of rivalry between evangelicals and the Catholic church before the revolution. But the feeling now is that they have a common cause -- preaching the gospel in a time of crisis. Archbishop Obando y Bravo, who spoke out on behalf of the Miskitos and the denominations whose churches were closed, is a highly respected figure among evangelicals. Father Luis Amado Pena, the priest who was charged with aiding the contras, endorsed the Month of the Bible and encouraged Catholics to join the final parade.

IRD: So, the Sandinistas haven't been able to use the differences between Protestants and Catholics against the bishops?

Rafferty: No. The Sandinistas tried to weaken the Catholic Church from within through the so-called Popular Church but that didn't work. The Popular Church is just like the churches that support CEPAD's ideology: lots of money, staff and government support, but few worshipers.

IRD: U.S. Catholics are now beginning to understand something about the Sandinista campaign against their church in Nicaragua. Protestants are more confused, at least in denominations that belong to the NCC. What can we do to help evangelicals in Nicaragua?

Rafferty: First of all, mainline Protestants need to establish direct contact with Nicaraguan evangelicals. Tours to Nicaragua financed by church money ought to be required to pay a visit to the National Council of Evangelical Pastors. Leaders of the National Council should also be brought to the United States. That way American church members could be exposed to another point of view. But even then members of the mainline denominations would still be the main benefactors of CEPAD and therefore morally responsible for what CEPAD does with their money. They should, at the very least, tell that organization to stop discriminating against Christians that do not support the Marxist-Leninist Sandinistas and to stop using their funds for political support for the Sandinistas.

IRD: In our experience, it is precisely CEPAD's support for the Sandinistas that makes that organization so attractive to some denominational staff members.

Rafferty: If that is the case, members of these denominations should find ways to directly aid the National Council of Evangelical Pastors. By supporting the CNPEN, American Protestants can avoid lending support to CEPAD's politics and do more to give direct help to Nicaraguan evangelicals.

[*The United Methodist Reporter*, November 15, 1985]

Church Officials in Nicaragua Said Arrested, Harassed

by ROY HOWARD BECK
Associate Editor

Reports late last week of marathon interrogations of many Nicaraguan church workers by their government stirred considerable activity among church leaders in the United States.

United Methodists and other mainline Protestants in the United States were urged by some conservative, "evangelical" Christians in this country to use their ties with Nicaragua's Sandinista rulers to plead for freedom of religious expression.

Some "evangelical" Nicaraguan pastors who met with a United Methodist bishops' delegation to the country in January were reportedly among church workers caught in the governmental security crackdown.

One bishop from the delegation told the Reporter last weekend that he hoped to raise concerns at the United Methodist Council of Bishops meeting Nov. 11-15 in Wichita, Kan. about the apparent deterioration of religious and civil liberties since the January visit.

The delegation had been sent last winter to tell Nicaraguans of the Council of Bishops' desire for peace and for an end to U.S. hostilities toward their government. Delegation members told the other bishops last spring that they found no religious repression in Nicaragua.

Security round-up described

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega issued a decree last month severely restricting civil freedoms of assembly, press, speech and movement. He said the action was necessary to protect the country from U.S.-backed rebels.

The round-up of at least nine church workers during the last two weeks reportedly involved:

- arrests in the middle of the night;
- interrogation sessions lasting six to 12 hours, often while church workers stood naked in "refrigerator" rooms;
- attempts to secure signed confessions of involvement with rebels;
- efforts to entrap church workers in what would appear to be sexual improprieties;
- warnings not to criticize the government, not to oppose the military draft and not to preach the Gospel to people outside church buildings.

One source told the Reporter that dozens of Roman Catholic priests also had been interrogated, but the Reporter at press time was unable to reach the U.S. Catholic Conference for comment.

No beatings were reported, and few church workers were reported incarcerated for more than a day. Among Protestants reportedly interrogated were the pastor of that nation's largest Protestant congregation and heads of the Nicaragua Bible Society, the Alliance for the Evangelization of Children, the Campus Crusade for Christ in Nicaragua and the National Council of Evangelical Pastors.

The Reporter gathered the reports from several sources. Among those sharing information and what they said were their own confirmations were the National Association of Evangelicals in Washington, Campus Crusade for Christ in California, the U.S. State Department in Washington, the Assemblies of God in Missouri and stories censored from the "*La Prensa*" newspaper in Nicaragua.

Most sources described to the Reporter how and from whom inside Nicaragua they got their information. They asked that sources inside Nicaragua not be identified publicly.

A New York spokeswoman for Amnesty International said the human rights organization's U.S. offices did not have confirmation of the incidents but that she would check with the group's London headquarters over the weekend. She said it was not unusual for the group not to know right away of repressions because people often were too terrorized to notify someone outside. Amnesty International has the endorsement of several religious groups, including United Methodists.

Mainline leaders not sure

Mainline Protestant leaders contacted by the Reporter late last week said they knew little or nothing about the alleged repression in Nicaragua and weren't sure what to think of the reports.

A National Council of Churches delegation had been in Nicaragua conferring with NCC contacts during the time of the reported intimidation of church workers. The Rev. Richard Butler, of that delegation and head of the NCC's Church World Service, declined to tell the Reporter anything about what the group saw or heard.

The Rev. Oscar Bolioli, head of the NCC's Latin American section, had remained in Nicaragua through last weekend.

Barbara Pessea of the Latin American office of the UMC's General Board of Global Ministries told the Reporter Nov. 8 that she would check with missionaries and contacts to find what was known and if any actions were planned to help.

Twelve directors of the UMC's Board of Global Ministries had met with staff of the Nicaraguan embassy in Washington early last week before meeting with U.S. Government officials to ask for better economic treatment of Nicaragua.

Bishop Kenneth Hicks (Kansas Area), a spokesman for that group and one of three bishops who went to Nicaragua in January, said embassy people were asked about restrictions on liberty imposed last month by President Ortega. (Global Ministries directors decided last month they didn't have enough information to officially express concern about President Ortega's emergency decree.)

He said the Nicaraguans said that they regretted the restrictions but that they had to "dig in their heels to control their society" while the United States had them under attack.

"I'm sorry to hear about (the reports of increased repression) down there," Bishop Hicks said when told later in the week, "but I have to say I'm not sure they have much choice, and I pray the excess actions can be kept to a minimum."

Sandinistas 'out of proportion'

Bishop C.P. Minnick (Raleigh, N.C., Area), coordinator of the bishops delegation to Nicaragua, told the Reporter that before he heard about the recent actions against pastors, he had decided to pose concerns to the Council of Bishops about restrictions on civil liberties in that country.

He said "proportionality" is important. He said the Sandinistas' restrictions on freedoms seem out of proportion to the needs of protection from the war. He said it might be appropriate to send official concerns to all Nicaraguan officials with whom the bishops' delegation had contact in January. All officials there had assured the bishops of their commitment to civil freedoms.

Bishop Minnick said that expressing concern about internal policies should not be seen as support for U.S. aggression against Nicaragua. "There are other ways to deal with problems such as these," he said. "It is not necessary to wage war."

Help asked

John Jones, spokesman for the Campus Crusade for Christ in San Bernardino, Calif., said he hopes mainline Protestant groups like the United Methodists' General Board of Global Ministries and Council of Bishops and the National Council of Churches will lend their influence to protecting "evangelicals" in Nicaragua.

He said nearly all top leaders of Campus Crusade in Nicaragua (all of them Nicaraguans) had been arrested, interrogated and warned against continuing their ministry. Their offices had been raided, and all materials (including 50,000 tracts of the "Four Spiritual Laws") and equipment had been confiscated.

"They said Bill Bright (head of the international para-church organization) is a friend of President Reagan; therefore, Campus Crusade in Nicaragua must be anti-government," Mr. Jones said.

Statement by Jimmy Hassan
National Religious Broadcasters Conference
Washington, D.C.,
February 3, 1986

Good afternoon. My name is Jimmy Hassan. I am the National Director of the Campus Crusade for Christ in Nicaragua. Before involving myself full-time in this ministry, I had, for most of my life, been involved in Christian work. Before becoming a full-time member of the Campus Crusade for Christ I practiced the profession of law. And for three years I was a judge in the criminal district in Masaya—this was after the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution.

October 31st of last year at about six in the morning, between fifteen and twenty soldiers of the Ministry of Interior arrived at my house. They knocked loudly on my door and forced me to open it. When I asked them why they had come, they responded that they had come to take me in for having violated the Law of Emergency. When I asked them the reason for this, they said that I had printed and was distributing counterrevolutionary literature. So I replied that perhaps they were mistaken because I was not affiliated with any political party and had no counterrevolutionary literature; I dedicated myself full-time to the preaching of the gospel and the literature that I had was a completely evangelistic type of literature. Could they please show me an example of counterrevolutionary literature that I had had printed. They took out copies of *The Four Spiritual Laws* [an official publication of CCC] and they said this was the proof that I was printing and distributing counterrevolutionary material.

They ordered me to accompany them, and so they took me in a patrol to the offices of the Campus Crusade in Managua and they proceeded to confiscate all the evangelistic material we had—about two thousand copies of *The Four Spiritual Laws* and other booklets that made reference to the Holy Spirit. This is the booklet that you can see when we finish [shows booklet]. Then they ordered me to take them to a commercial printing house where we had ordered six thousand printings of *The Four Spiritual Laws*. When we arrived at that printing press they confiscated all that material and they warned the owner of the press that if he ever again did printing for us or for any other evangelical organization, his printing house would be confiscated and he would be arrested for having violated the Law of Emergency.

From there they took me to the jail of the Ministry of Interior [El Chipote] where they had me for several hours under interrogation about the content of this material and why we produce material that alienated the people, that caused people to depart from the revolutionary ideas that they were communicating.

In the afternoon they told me that they were going to set me free. But Captain Charlotte Baltodano, who was at that time the Chief of Mass Media for the Ministry of Interior, pointed her pistol against my chest and told me that if I told anyone in another country or within Nicaragua what had happened, the Ministry of Interior would hold me responsible and I would "be sorry that I had been born." But they themselves had given much publicity to the matter because they took me around many streets in Managua in their patrol car when they were confiscating the material. When I arrived in my house, there was a patrol car from the Ministry of Interior in front.

During the first hours of the evening various persons arrived to visit me. They had been told that to be involved with me was dangerous. At 11 pm, four officials of the Ministry of Interior arrived and they gave me a citation to appear the next day at the State Security at 8 in the morning.

Earlier than that hour I arrived at the offices of the State Security [El Chipote]. They made me go in a small room and at 8 o'clock sharp three officers of State Security came in and suddenly one of them exploded with violence and he said to me: "We are going to establish the rules of the game. First, to us you're a dog. We are going to destroy you. You're an enemy of the revolution. We are all powerful." They said if I wanted to save myself I had to confess to them that I was an agent of American imperialism, that I was a CIA agent, and that along with other Christian leaders I was conspiring to overthrow the Sandinista government. Since all that was absolutely false, I contradicted all their affirmations. They continued for the next two or three hours hurling charges at me; for example, that I preached to the young people and because of that they were leaving Marxism. Also that I was the enemy of the revolution because I was not a member of CEPAD [Evangelical Committee for Aid to Development].

After about two and a half hours of being in that room, they said there was nothing they could do with me and that they would keep me there indefinitely. Then they opened the door and a very tall officer entered the room. He asked them if I had cooperated. They told him no. Then he pulled out his pistol and put it up to my forehead. He said, "With me you're not going to play around." He pushed me and made me sit down again and he said, "Now you're going to confess immediately that you're an enemy of the revolution and agent of the CIA, and all the work that you do is a projection of American imperialism." So I said, "I am cooperating and speaking the truth. If I accepted a lie, that would be against you." He got up angrily and put the pistol again at my forehead. He pulled the trigger, but the gun was empty. Then he ordered me to stand up. They took me out of that room.

They put me in a jeep facing the floor, with my forehead on the floor, and then they took me to the State Security jail, located behind the Intercontinental Hotel. They took me out of the jeep, making me go down to a basement. They made me walk through several hallways with my face down toward the floor. Then they took me to a particular hallway where there were a number of small rooms. They opened one door and put me inside. The room measured exactly two feet by two feet. There was no opening for air to enter. You could only stand up. And then constantly two or three officers would be opening the door. One would say to the other, "Should I kill him now or later." And the other would say, "No, later." They would slam the door shut.

About three hours later they took me to a room far away. It was a larger room and in this room they took my fingerprints. They measured me. They weighed me. They took photos from the front and the side. And then they ordered me to undress. But I told them I would not undress. They would have to undress me, if they wanted it done. Several times after pretending they were about to hit me, they took me out of the room. They put me back in the tiny cell, then they took me to another small room which was extremely cold—more or less what it would be like if you walk out of the door of the hotel, here; but not the way it feels today, but how it felt on Sunday. In Managua the temperature is very hot. For two hours they had me in that room. And then finally they said that they were going to begin proceedings to arrest my wife because I had not wanted to confess my links with the counterrevolutionaries.

Again they took me to the hallway of the two-by-two cell. They opened the door and inside the room there was one of the members of the Campus Crusade. They shut that door and opened another one. There was another staff member completely nude. And then they shut that door and opened another one, and in that room there was a young woman involved in the movement, completely nude. They shut the door and opened another one and put me in. About an hour later they took me out of the cell and back in the cold room. Here they told me that all my fellow staff members had confessed everything and that they didn't need my confession, but that they wanted to give me another opportunity. Because I kept insisting on my innocence, they took me back to the offices where they had me in the morning.

They put me in a jeep again and took me back to the Campus Crusade Office. Just as we arrived they arrested five of the young men of the movement who were there praying at that time. At that point they began to remove all the files that we had in the office. They took films, projectors, seven projectors, fourteen films, photocopiers, all of the office equipment. All material that we had. The only thing that they didn't take was the desk and a coffee maker they said wasn't working. Afterwards they told me I was free, but I had to go to my house, and that I should not leave my house.

When I arrived in my house I found my wife; they had not arrested her. You see, when I was in the cold room the second time I began to hear the crying of a woman and the officer told me that possibly she was my wife. So when I was set free there at my office I thought that my wife was arrested.

I began looking for the other staff members that had been arrested. While in jail I had seen the Director of the Bible Society, Ignacio Hernandez; the President of the Children's Evangelist Fellowship, Modesto Alvarez. We went to their houses. Only one of the staff members had been set free. At dawn the next day they set the others free. And then via the testimony of Benedicto, one of the young men that I had seen nude in the cell, I learned he had been interrogated about the materials taken from the office, totally vandalistic. When they had him nude they had taken him to another cell where they had held a hose, wet him down, and then taken him to the cold room. Then, when he shivered, they hit him. At dawn they set him free. Next day Boanerges Mendoza was arrested. He is the pastor of the First Evangelical Church of Managua. On November 3rd they arrested Reverend Juan Simon Videa, Superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Nicaragua. They also arrested Saturnino Cerrato, the Vice-Superintendent of the Assemblies of God. The fourth was a day of rest. The fifth of November they arrested Reverend Felix Rosales, President of the Council of Pastors in Nicaragua [CNPEN]. The same day, in the course of celebrating an evangelistic campaign in the Western side of Managua, a group of armed people *[turba]* arrived and hit children and women. The police arrested the preacher Guillermo Sandoval. They took about 3 million cordobas [the Nicaraguan currency] and destroyed all the equipment in the campaign. On the eighth of November they arrested Guillermo Gustavo Sevilla, the President of the Council of Pastors of Managua. And then they arrested Reverend Guillermo Ayala, President of the Pentecostal Baptists in Nicaragua. Next day they arrested Rolando Mena, President of the Evangelical radio station. And in the various departments or states in Nicaragua, they arrested several Evangelical pastors.

After my arrest, until December 10th, State Security visited all my relatives, my friends, my companions at work, and they interrogated all of them and they prohibited them to have any contact with me with the threats that they would take them to jail.

Briefly, this is my testimony. I would like to state that I am a privileged person because dozens of Nicaraguan Christians have passed through much more painful experiences than mine. They have suffered much more. Especially the churches in the countryside. And especially those that have very little communication with the city. I will be glad to answer any question related to the things I have shared with you this afternoon.

Questions and Answers

Q. There are rumors that CEPAD tried to help you. What did CEPAD do to help you?

A. As I said earlier, Captain Charlotte Baltodano told me that the Ministry of Interior would make sure that I was sorry I had been born if I had declared what I had experienced that day. So this is my situation in Nicaragua. I was under that threat. CEPAD did absolutely nothing to help me.

Q. Are you going back to Nicaragua, or are you planning on staying in the United States?

A. I have no plans of staying in the United States. I am evaluating my future in the light of the experience I have lived.

Q. What is it that you preach that would encourage the young to repudiate the revolution?

A. Lieutenant Mendez said to me after my second day of arrest that my problem was that I preached and that my message caused the young to depart from Marxism and that this will never again be allowed in Nicaragua. What I preach in Nicaragua, and what I preach anywhere in the world where I am, is basically what's contained in this booklet: God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. Man is sinful, separated from God. Jesus Christ is the only provision for man's salvation. We must receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This is the only message I have preached in Nicaragua. Whatever interpretation of this message depends on what you hear, but I consider the message of Jesus Christ the most revolutionary message.

Q. Have you ever addressed the issue of the military service?

A. Never have I spoken in Nicaragua, nor in any other place, against the military service. I have always limited myself to preaching the gospel in the evangelical churches in Nicaragua. Only the gospel is preached because we believe it is the power of God for everyone who believes. We haven't preached against any law of the Sandinista government. Nor, in any sense of the word, against the government.

Q. Mr. Hassan, after the experiences that you have had, how has this affected you about the war being waged by the contras?

A. When one of the officers at State Security told me that I could go to my house, I said to him I wanted to leave it clear that as a Christian I loved him and I wanted him to know Christ. I gave him three books that had been left. And this is the same point of view that I have at this moment. We love all Nicaraguans. All Nicaraguans need to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and that every man needs Christ and evidently without Christ one has no hope. I consider myself an Ambassador of Christ of all Nicaraguans.

Q. I have personally spoken to one of the gentlemen that you mentioned here, along with other Nicaraguans, and they have reported to me numerous assassinations of both evangelical pastors and membership of the churches in Nicaragua. Is this something that Mr. Hassan has information about? Can he confirm any of this?

A. You must understand that I come from a country where the information is totally censored. For this reason, all the information that I know and have about Nicaragua comes from what the government wants Nicaraguans to know. Or is received under very difficult circumstances. I think that here in this city there are people who come from Nicaragua, as, for example, Reverend Prudencio Baltodano who lived in the mountains. He can give you a testimony nearer to the one I have given.

Q. What is the general feeling of the average Nicaraguans for or against the Freedom Fighters?

A. As I responded earlier. The information that we are able to have in Nicaragua is totally censored. Even a simple conversation can carry very great consequences for our security. I left recently Nicaragua and I am unable to evaluate a situation that would require knowing a great deal from freely gathered information.

Q. Have you met in an official capacity with any member of the U.S. Government since you've been here?

A. Neither officially nor unofficially.

Q. My name is David Jessup. I am a member of the board of the Institute for Religion and Democracy and also a member of the United Methodist Church. There is a group of four United Methodist missionaries in Nicaragua, sustained by contributions from our denomination. They recently wrote a letter which was reported partly in *The Washington Post* today. Their letter, in essence, takes the point of view of the Nicaraguan government. It accuses your group of, in fact, in essence, of being agents of the CIA. It accuses the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Nicaragua, and this is a direct quote, "They have abused their freedoms of religion and speech to actively work in support of the counterrevolution." And finally it quotes CEPAD as saying you who were arrested suffered no torture. Members of our group will have a response to this letter on Wednesday. We find it very shameful. I would like to ask if you are aware that this letter had been written and if you have any response to this group of U.S. missionaries living in Nicaragua?

A. In the first place I'd like to make clear that I am not from the CIA nor the KGB. I am with neither the left nor the right. I am not with those in the front or in the back. Neither with those in the center; neither with those that are above or below. I am in a different dimension. I am with Christ. Whatever charge they make against me and the leaders of the Crusade in Nicaragua, about having any ties with any government or organization, will have the same answer. I am unable to evaluate the motives for why they would give this information. But I know that men are capable of producing any idea—even what this letter has to say.

Q. Is there any information in Nicaragua about the contras?

A. I haven't had any relation with the people who are fighting against the Sandinista government. The information—the press, radio, television, and other mass media—is completely controlled, censored by the government. That's what I've said. Let me respond to something that was left in the air, that I had not been tortured, only arrested. According to the Vice Minister of Interior, Omar Cabezas, he said that we had not been tortured—only that we had had a pleasant conversation with State Security agents. I pray that no Nicaraguan will have another of these cordial chats.

Q. From your experiences in Nicaragua as a born-again Christian, should Christians in Nicaragua and around the world take a stand against the Marxist government in Nicaragua through nonviolent resistance or through the violent counterrevolution?

A. I think that the Christian needs to act and I am making a call to the Christian Church to place themselves alongside the church in Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan church needs at this time to know that they are not alone. And that they can count on the solidarity of the church in the entire world, including here in the U.S. This is to say that you as Christian communicators have in your hands the possibility to transmit to the churches here in the United States the necessity—grave and urgent—that exists in Nicaragua, and the need for help that the church in Nicaragua has today.

Q. What kind of help?

A. In the first place, the Nicaraguan government, I believe, I want them to know that the Christians in Nicaragua are not some isolated group, but that we are part of a worldwide body and that this body is alongside of its brothers in Nicaragua. I urge the American churches and churches in the entire world to write to the Nicaraguan government. In this city there should be a Nicaraguan embassy and in the capitals of the whole world. I think a first step would be to write the Nicaraguan government letting them know that the church in the world has its eyes placed on the church in Nicaragua—that the liberty, the integrity, the well-being of the Nicaraguan church is being observed by the entire world and no single violation of the liberty of worship, liberty of conscience, liberty of communication, to move about, will be overlooked because the church is taking it into account. On the other hand, the situation in Nicaragua is such that not only does the government need to know that the violations will not be overlooked, but also that the church in Nicaragua know that all her brothers and sisters are interested.

Q. I would like to know how many evangelicals are in Nicaragua. All the persons that you mentioned, are they free or are they still in prison? How do you see the situation of the church in Nicaragua? Is there underground worship or underground churches?

A. Thirteen percent of the Nicaraguan population are evangelical Christians. All the names that I mentioned are out of jail, but their liberty is limited because every movement that they make is followed by State Security. For example, one of the most prominent leaders in Managua is constantly detained in the streets, and they don't let him participate in any meeting. The same thing happened with me. State Security is visiting every Christian leader daily to interrogate them. So I say that they are out of jail, but without the liberty that they should have.

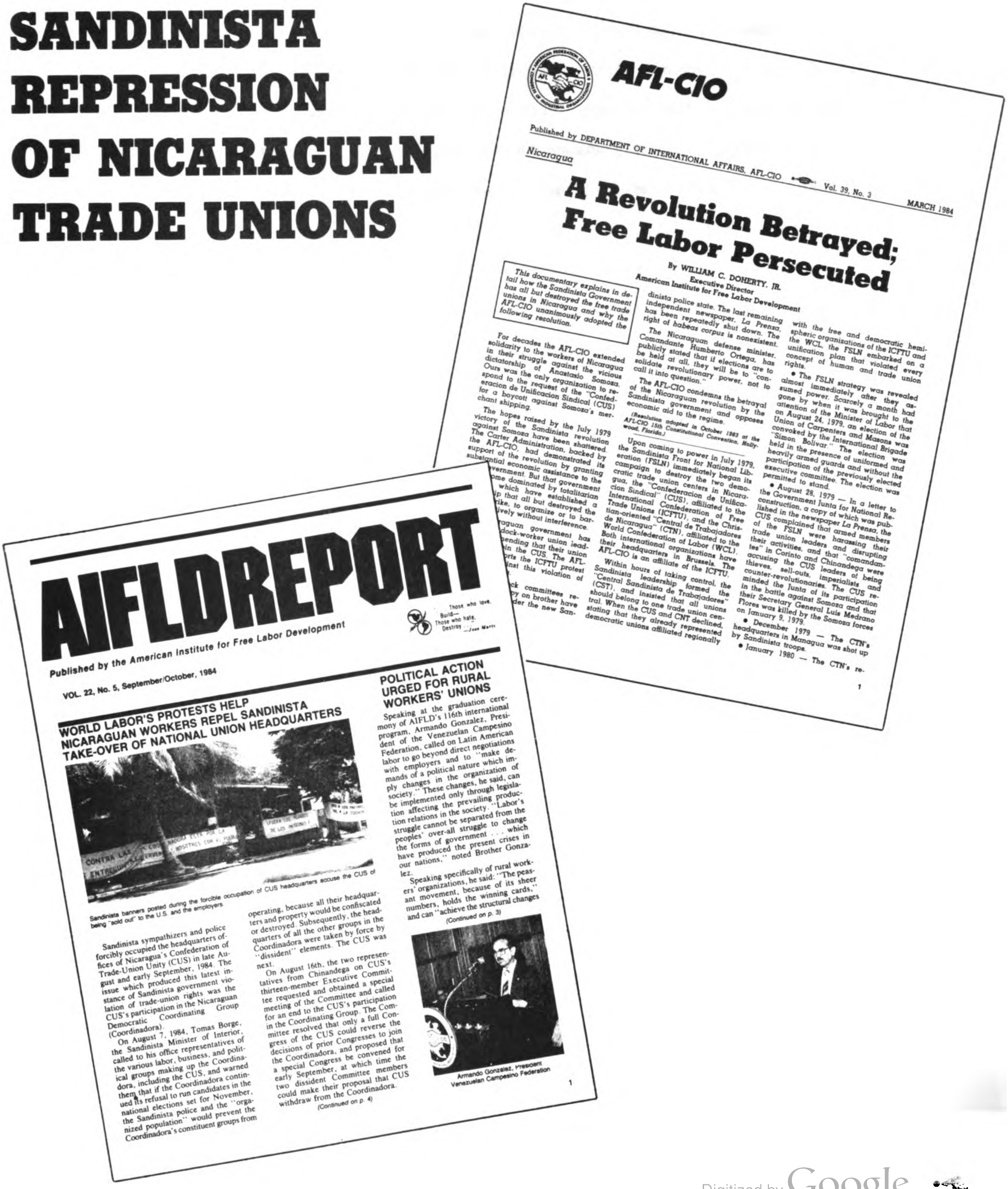
If there is an underground church, it would necessarily be secret. But I know that the Christian church is strong, will resist any circumstance whatever. We are not depending on the circumstances, because we are in the hands of God.

Annex 9

Repression of Labor

The following document is a report on Sandinista repression of organized labor prepared by the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), an arm of the American Federation of Labor—Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) which works with Latin American labor organizations promoting the free trade union movement. [A comprehensive August 1985 study titled "Sandinista Deception Reaffirmed: Nicaragua Coverup of Trade Union Repression," which provides detailed information on 39 cases of Sandinista repression of labor organizations, is available from AIFLD.]

SANDINISTA REPRESSION OF NICARAGUAN TRADE UNIONS



AFL-CIO

Published by DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, AFL-CIO Vol. 39, No. 3 MARCH 1984

Nicaragua

A Revolution Betrayed; Free Labor Persecuted

By WILLIAM C. DOHERTY, JR.
Executive Director
American Institute for Free Labor Development

This documentary explains in detail how the Sandinista Government has all but destroyed the free trade unions in Nicaragua and why the AFL-CIO unanimously adopted the following resolution.

For decades the AFL-CIO extended solidarity to the workers of Nicaragua in their struggle against the vicious dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza. Ours was the only organization to respond to the request of the "Confederacion de Unificacion Sindical (CUS) for a boycott against Somoza's merchant shipping.

The hopes raised by the July 1979 victory of the Sandinista revolution against Somoza have been shattered. The Carter Administration, backed by the AFL-CIO, had demonstrated its support of the revolution by granting substantial economic assistance to the ...vernment. But that government ...ome dominated by totalitarian ... which have established a ...ip that all but destroyed the ...ike, to organize or to bar...ively without interference.

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The Nicaraguan defense minister, Comandante Humberto Ortega, has publicly stated that if elections are to be held at all, they will be to "consolidate revolutionary power, not to call it into question."

The AFL-CIO condemns the betrayal of the Nicaraguan revolution by the Sandinista government and opposes economic aid to the regime.

(Resolution adopted in October 1983 at the AFL-CIO 15th Constitutional Convention, Hollywood, Florida.)

Upon coming to power in July 1979, the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) immediately began its campaign to destroy the two democratic trade union centers in Nicaragua, the "Confederacion de Unificacion Sindical" (CUS), affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and the Christian-oriented "Central de Trabajadores de Nicaragua" (CTN), affiliated to the World Confederation of Labor (WCL). Both international organizations have their headquarters in Brussels. The AFL-CIO is an affiliate of the ICFTU.

Within hours of taking control, the Sandinista leadership formed the "Central Sandinista de Trabajadores" (CST), and insisted that all unions should belong to one trade union central. When the CUS and CNT declined, stating that they already represented democratic unions affiliated regionally with the free and democratic hemispheric organizations of the ICFTU and the WCL, the FSLN embarked on a unification plan that violated every concept of human and trade union rights.

- The FSLN strategy was revealed almost immediately after they assumed power. Scarcely a month had gone by when it was brought to the attention of the Minister of Labor that on August 24, 1979, an election of the Union of Carpenters and Masons was convoked by the International Brigade "Simon Bolivar." The election was held in the presence of uniformed and heavily armed guards and without the participation of the previously elected executive committee. The election was permitted to stand.
- August 28, 1979 — In a letter to the Government Junta for National Reconstruction, a copy of which was published in the newspaper *La Prensa*, the CUS complained that armed members of the FSLN were harassing their trade union leaders and disrupting their activities, and that "comandantes" in Corinto and Chinandega were accusing the CUS leaders of being thieves, sell-outs, imperialists and counter-revolutionaries. The CUS reminded the Junta of its participation in the battle against Somoza and that their Secretary General Luis Medrano Flores was killed by the Somoza forces on January 9, 1979.
- December 1979 — The CTN's headquarters in Managua was shot up by Sandinista troops.
- January 1980 — The CTN's re-

1

AIFLDREPORT

Published by the American Institute for Free Labor Development

Those who love,
Build—
Those who hate,
Destroy —Jose Marti

VOL. 22, No. 5, September/October, 1984

WORLD LABOR'S PROTESTS HELP NICARAGUAN WORKERS REPEL SANDINISTA TAKE-OVER OF NATIONAL UNION HEADQUARTERS

Sandinista banners posted during the forcible occupation of CUS headquarters accuse the CUS of being "sold out" to the U.S. and the employers.

Sandinista sympathizers and police forcibly occupied the headquarters offices of Nicaragua's Confederation of Trade-Union Unity (CUS) in late August and early September, 1984. The issue which produced this latest instance of Sandinista government violation of trade-union rights was the CUS's participation in the Nicaraguan Democratic Coordinating Group (Coordinadora).

On August 7, 1984, Tomas Borge, the Sandinista Minister of Interior, called to his office representatives of the various labor, business, and political groups making up the Coordinadora, including the CUS, and warned them that if the Coordinadora continued its refusal to run candidates in the national elections set for November, the Sandinista police and the "organized population" would prevent the Coordinadora's constituent groups from operating, because all their headquarters and property would be confiscated or destroyed. Subsequently, the headquarters of all the other groups in the Coordinadora were taken by force by "dissident" elements. The CUS was next.

On August 16th, the two representatives from Chinandega on CUS's thirteen-member Executive Committee requested and obtained a special meeting of the Committee and called for an end to the CUS's participation in the Coordinating Group. The Committee resolved that only a full Congress of the CUS could reverse the decisions of prior Congresses to join the Coordinadora, and proposed that a special Congress be convened for early September, at which time the two dissident Committee members could make their proposal that CUS withdraw from the Coordinadora.

(Continued on p. 4)

POLITICAL ACTION URGED FOR RURAL WORKERS' UNIONS

Speaking at the graduation ceremony of AIFLD's 116th international program, Armando Gonzalez, President of the Venezuelan Campesino Federation, called on Latin American labor to go beyond direct negotiations with employers and to "make demands of a political nature which imply changes in the organization of society." These changes, he said, can be implemented only through legislation affecting the prevailing production relations in the society. "Labor's struggle cannot be separated from the peoples' over-all struggle to change the forms of government . . . which have produced the present crises in our nations," noted Brother Gonzalez.

Speaking specifically of rural workers' organizations, he said: "The peasant movement, because of its sheer numbers, holds the winning cards," and can "achieve the structural changes

(Continued on p. 3)

Armando Gonzalez, President
Venezuelan Campesino Federation

1

INTRODUCTION

One of the most disturbing aspects of the Sandinistas' efforts to install a totalitarian system in Nicaragua is their repression of the workers' rights to organize, bargain, and strike. For democratic trade unionists in Nicaragua, the fact that the Sandinistas parade as a "proletarian" movement merely adds insult to injury.

In an article carried in the AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News in March, 1984, entitled "A Revolution Betrayed; Free Labor Persecuted", I described the pattern of Sandinista repression of free trade unions from the overthrow of the Somoza tyranny in mid-1979 through early 1984.

I have now tried to bring the depressing story up to date through the end of 1984 in a second article: "The Sandinistas and the Workers - The Betrayal Continues". In this booklet AIFLD presents both articles, which together cover the full period of the Sandinistas' five years in power.

We hope that by bringing the facts on Sandinista violations of labor's rights to the attention of free trade unionists worldwide, we can generate more solidarity and support for the determined democratic labor leaders within Nicaragua who continue to fight the totalitarian tide.

William C. Doherty, Jr.

January, 1985

THE SANDINISTAS AND THE WORKERS - THE BETRAYAL CONTINUES

William C. Doherty, Jr.

Sandinista repression of trade-union rights and harassment of non-Sandinista labor leaders continued unabated throughout 1984, despite the "Comandantes" promises that civil liberties would be expanded during the fall 1984 "election" campaign. The same pattern that prevailed from the first days of Sandinista power in 1979 is still being applied: pressure on all workers and local officers of unions which remain affiliated to the Christian Democratic confederation (CTN) or the ICFTU affiliate in Nicaragua (CUS). The various forms of threats, arrests, beatings, interrogations, slanders, and economic reprisals used in this campaign of repression have been described in a number of articles. (1) Some of the most egregious examples of Sandinista repression of the workers in the last nine months of 1984 can provide an idea of what it is like to be a free trade unionist in Nicaragua today:

Sandinista goons attack CUS vocational school inauguration (May 1984):

With the help of Canada's foreign assistance program, Nicaragua's democratic Confederation of Trade Union Unification (CUS) has been able to open a Worker Vocational Training Center in the Maria Auxiliadora district of Managua. The Center serves an area of high unemployment by providing young people with skills.

In April, 1984, the CUS used a sound-truck to spread the word that registration was open for courses at the new Center. In two days 162 prospective students had signed up for classes, and opening ceremonies were scheduled for May Day. As the students gathered the Center was attacked by a mob organized by Sandinista Defense Committees and armed with rocks and clubs. The Sandinistas broke up the meeting and forced the CUS members out of the Center.

When the CUS persisted in its intention to open the Center even after this violent incident, its leaders received death threats and were publicly accused of being traitors, CIA agents, and employers' stooges. The CUS leadership protested the violation of the workers rights to Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega. The only response came not from the Comandante himself, but from local Sandinista officials who suddenly decided that the training center could not open, because the government had already planned to open a sewing school in the same neighborhood. The CUS replied that even two vocational schools in the area could not begin to fill the needs of the people there.

Despite the violence, the threats, and the bureaucratic harassment, the CUS went ahead and opened its school and began its first six-month course. Of the 162 who originally had signed up, 75 began the course. Sandinista hostility continued, but 35 students withstood the pressures and completed the course. (The Sandinistas' sewing school never materialized). Speaking at the graduation ceremony on November 12, 1984, CUS Secretary General Alvin Guthrie praised the graduates for their "bravery and sacrifices, and their determination to improve themselves". He also praised the women who served as instructors for "keeping their morale high and never bending in spite of the threats they received". (2)

Wildcat Strike of Victoria Brewery Workers (August, 1984):

The brewery is owned by the Nicaraguan government, having been taken over shortly after the 1979 revolution. The union in the plant is affiliated to the official CTS confederation. During the five years of soaring inflation under the Sandinistas, the Victoria workers' wages were subjected to a general wage freeze applied to most Nicaraguan workers.When their CTS leaders did nothing on their behalf, the workers took advantage of a July, 1984 easing of restrictions on the right to strike and walked off their jobs, occupied the plant in a sit-in, and refused to leave the premises until their wage demands were met.

The officers of the Victoria union opposed the strike, but drivers for other breweries and soft-drink plants in Managua paraded over 100 trucks past the occupied Victoria plant, shouting slogans of solidarity with the strikers and honking the horns of their trucks.

After five days the Sandinista Minister of Labor came to the plant and warned the workers that their strike was illegal and they could be prosecuted if they continued it. Leaders of the CTS were quoted in the government newspaper as urging the strikers to go back to work. Faced with this pressure, after five days the workers went back to their jobs, pending a report by a mediation panel, but kept up the pressure by engaging in a work slow-down. This impertinence led one CTS leader to characterize the workers he obstensibly represented as "backward and disobedient".(3)

Forcible Sandinista Occupation of CUS Headquarters (August - September, 1984):

On August 7, 1984, Tomas Borge, the Sandinista Minister of Interior, called to his office representatives of the various labor, business, and political groups making up the Democratic Coordinator, including the CUS, and warned them that if the "Coordinadora" continued its refusal to run candidates in the national elections set for November, the Sandinista police and the "organized population" would prevent the Coordinadora's constituent groups from operating, because all their headquarters and property would be confiscated or destroyed. Subsequently, the headquarters of all the other groups in the Coordinadora were taken by force by "dissident" elements. The CUS was next.

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On August 18th, when the two top CUS leaders were out of the country, the two dissidents arrived again at CUS headquarters, together with a group of twenty persons whom they had brought to Managua from Chinandega in a truck owned by the government telephone company.

The next morning CUS officers discovered that during the night the dissidents had broken into the CUS offices, and were occupying them, sleeping on mattresses provided by the Sandinista party and receiving meals thrice daily which were brought to them in government trucks. On subsequent nights, ten armed Sandinista soldiers joined the group each night in the offices.

In an effort to defuse the situation, the CUS Executive Committee convoked an "Extraordinary Assembly" of the CUS. On August 25 the various delegates arrived at the CUS headquarters, along with members of the Executive Committee. The latter were admitted to the offices by the dissident group occupying them, and a Council meeting was held, at which it was decided that only a full Congress, not just an Assembly, could take a decision to reverse the previous Congresses' decisions to participate in the Coordinadora. A special Congress was convoked for late September.

When the CUS officers emerged from the building to announce this decision to the assembled delegates, a Sandinista mob, armed with sticks and stones, attacked the delegates. During the ensuing 25-minute melee, fifteen Sandinista policemen present in the area looked on, taking no action. Twenty-two persons were injured in the fighting, five of them requiring hospitalization.

Subsequently, that evening the Ministry of the Interior, using the Sandinista Police, took over control of the offices from the dissident group, and occupied the building from August 25th through September 6th, citing the "dispute" within the CUS as necessitating this action.

The Sandinista mob action and the police take-over were immediately and vigorously protested by international labor. Lane Kirkland, President of the AFL-CIO, sent a cable to Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomas Borge demanding that his government "cease and desist its occupation of CUS headquarters and intervention in its internal affairs. This anti-union conduct is a direct violation of ILO Convention 87, which guarantees freedom of association, and which Nicaragua has ratified." The Director General of the International Labor Organization immediately contacted the Sandinista government and other protests were sent by national labor centers in Canada, Costa Rica, Norway, Spain, Panama, Mexico and Italy, as well as by the ORIT and the ICFTU.

Subsequent to the international protests, on September 7th the police returned control of the offices to CUS officers. Upon entering the offices they found a scene of destruction - desks and files had been looted, doors and windows broken, and membership files, financial accounts, proceedings of Congresses, photographs, and some money had been stolen. As Interior Minister Borge had warned the CUS on August 7th, its headquarters had indeed been taken over and its property destroyed. (4)

Sandinista Denial of Travel Rights to Democratic Labor Leaders (November, 1984):

Once the Sandinistas' carefully-controlled national election campaign was over on November 4, 1984, the Nicaraguan regime began a campaign of harassment against opposition groups which involved, among other actions, denials of exit permits and confiscating of passports when opposition leaders wished to travel abroad. In some cases Nicaraguan officials deliberately ripped out pages from would-be travelers' passports at the airport, and then forbade their departure because the passport was damaged. (5)

This campaign violated Article 22 of the OAS American Human Rights Convention which states: "Every person has the right to depart freely from any country, including his own." (6) The denials of travel rights were aimed primarily at officers of groups belonging to the Democratic Coordinator, which had boycotted the elections because of the absence of adequate freedom to campaign. The two labor confederations affiliated with the Coordinator suffered their share of harassment, including the Confederation of Trade Union Unification (CUS), which like the AFL-CIO is affiliated with the ICFTU.

In a protest released to the press on November 30th, 1984 in Brussels, the ICFTU stated:

> The Nicaraguan authorities are preventing four top trade union leaders from leaving the country to attend union meetings abroad. Since November 19th, the authorities have withheld their passports and refused to provide them with exit visas.

Noting that the anti-travel actions were in line with the authorities' "constant pressure aimed at forcing union members and federations to join the government-sponsored CTS", the ICFTU said that it had "denounced these latest incidents" in a cable to Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega in which the ICFTU stated:

> This attitude contradicts repeated promises to the effect that civil liberties will be fully respected in the country.

The ICFTU's Western hemispheric grouping, ORIT, called on its affiliates to protest the travel bans on the CUS leaders. President Lane Kirkland of the AFL-CIO then cabled the following statement to the Nicaraguan government:

> We deplore the retention of passports and the refusal of exit visas for trade union brothers Alvin Guthrie Rivers, Jose Espinosa Nava, Omar Baca and Santos Tijerino of the Confederation de Unification Sindical (CUS), affiliate of the ORIT, ICFTU. The continued violation of trade union rights and human rights against democratic trade union leaders in Nicaragua should cease.

Subsequent to these international protests, the four labor leaders finally received exit permits, and were able to travel.

Events in the labor sector in Nicaragua during 1984, as shown by the above examples, confirmed the betrayal by the Sandinista regime of its initial promise to the Nicaraguan people regarding respect for democratic pluralism. Every effort of the regime has been in the direction of a totalitarian-style, government-controlled labor movement. The holding of carefully-managed elections in November did not lead to any improvement, but merely to further harassment and repression. The disillusionment felt by all who had hoped for a positive change in Nicaragua was expressed by former Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez in a letter to President-elect Ortega of Nicaragua, responding to an invitation to attend Ortega's inaugural ceremony. Mr. Perez, who is currently Vice President of the Socialist International, stated:

> Those of us who believe we have done so much for the Sandinista revolution feel cheated, because sufficient guarantees were not provided to assure the participation of all political forces. Sadly, the limiting in

> this way of true political pluralism weakened the credibility of the elections.
>
> These are the considerations that lead me today to decline your cordial invitation to attend the ceremonies on Jan 10, 1985.(7)

Despite disillusionment, and facing a dictatorial regime determined to stamp out pluralism, the democratic labor movements of Nicaragua are continuing to stand their ground. Both the ICFTU-affiliated CUS and the Christian Democratic CTN remain active in the Democratic Coordinator grouping. In mid-December 1984, in fact, Jose Espinosa of the CUS was elected first Vice President of the Democratic Coordinator. Given the determination of Nicaraguan workers to defend their trade-union rights, they deserve all the solidarity and support which free trade unions throughout the world can give them. We cannot leave them to face this challenge alone, for the principle which they defend, and which the Sandinistas assault is our principle also: freedom of association.

NOTES

1. See also: Sam Leiken, "Labor Under Siege", The New Republic, October 8, 1984;

Ronald Radosh, "Darkening Nicaragua", The New Republic, October 24, 1983;

William C. Doherty, Jr., "The Decline of Free Trade Unionism in Nicaragua", AFL-CIO Free Trade Union News, June 1983.

The Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua (CPDHN), Informe Sindical, Managua, 1984.

Edgard Macia, "Labor Relations in the Sandinista Regime", Alternative, Washington, DC, February 11, 1983.

2. This account is reprinted from The AIFLD Report, November-December, 1984.

3. See Sam Leiken, op-cit., p. 18; New York Times, August 27, 1984, p. A-2.

4. This account is excerpted from The AIFLD Report, September-October 1984, and is based on the official report on the incident by Juan Marval of the ORIT staff, which was forwarded to the ICFTU in September, 1984.

5. See the New York Times, November 25, 1984, p. A-16; The Washington Post, December 3, 1984, p. A-1; and The Miami Herald, December 5, 1984, p. 4-A.

6. See Manual de Normas Vigentes en Materia de Derechos Humanos, Comision Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, OAS, Washington, DC, 1979, p. 56.

7. See The Wall Street Journal, January 11, 1985, p. 19.

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The Nicaraguan government has jailed seven dock-worker union leaders for recommending that their union in Corinto rejoin the CUS. The AFL-CIO fully supports the ICFTU protest to the ILO against this violation of trade union rights.

Cuban-style block committees requiring brother to spy on brother have been established under the new Sandinista police state. The last remaining independent newspaper, *La Prensa*, has been repeatedly shut down. The right of *habeas corpus* is nonexistent.

The Nicaraguan defense minister, Comandante Humberto Ortega, has publicly stated that if elections are to be held at all, they will be to "consolidate revolutionary power, not to call it into question."

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- December 1979 — The CTN's headquarters in Managua was shot up by Sandinista troops.
- January 1980 — The CTN's re-

gional office was forcibly occupied by Sandinista troops.

- Also in January, the port union of Corinto was terrorized into affiliating to the Sandinista confederation after the union's Secretary General was arrested and held without charges; the home of the CUS's secretary for cultural affairs was bombed in Leon; and four other CUS leaders in the area, including the president of the CUS Manisa Federation, were arrested.
- March 1980 — Comandante Thomas Borge personally intervened in the affairs of the Hotel Intercontinental union, a CUS affiliate, and demanded that new officers be elected. When the election didn't turn out to his liking, he demanded a second election.
- October 1980 — The Sandinista Confederation (CTS), affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the Marxist labor international with headquarters in Prague, Czechoslovakia.
- October 22, 1980 — Luis Malma, a Peruvian union representative of the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees (FIET), an international trade secretariat which had supported their affiliates in Nicaragua during the oppressive years of Somoza, was arrested by five armed members of the state security department. He was taken to the Ministry of the Interior and was interrogated for two days at El Chepote, which was formerly called the Bunker. After his two-day ordeal, the security forces took him to his home, picked up his wife, advising her that she could take only two personal items with her. They were driven under armed guard to the Costa Rican border and released. All of their personal belongings, such as linens, tableware, china, radios, etc., were confiscated by the guards. Brother Malma was never told the reasons for his expulsion.

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- February 12, 1981 — Three leaders of the "Javier Guerra" trade union, and three CTN leaders in the Mandaime area were arrested by state security forces.
- February 13, 1981 — The Secretary General of the CTN, Carlos Huembes, was attacked and brutally beaten by Sandinista thugs at the Managua airport in the presence of government troops. He was taken to a hospital where it was found that he had a broken nose and deep lacerations about the body. He was constantly followed by state secret agents and was publicly attacked as a traitor by government officials. The words "Always Watched. Death to the Traitors of the FSLN." were painted in bold letters on the outside walls of his home.
- February 16, 1981 — Two CTN trade union leaders were arrested in the Matagalpa province and released only after being threatened with death if they remained in the CTN.
- January 1982 — The Chinandega Transport Union, with approximately 2,000 members, which was affiliated to the Sandinista Confederation (CST), became dissatisfied with the services given to the union by the Sandinistas. The union called a general assembly and invited representatives of the CST and the country's two other trade union centers, the CNT and the CUS. The object of the general assembly was to enable workers to decide with which national center they wanted their union to be affiliated. The 480 delegates who attended voted as follows: CST, 11 votes; CTN, 69 votes; CUS, 400 votes. The visiting representatives of the three national trade union centers signed an agreement by which they pledged to respect the democratic vote of the workers. However, the very next day reprisals began, and the Secretary General of the union had his driver's license confiscated by the authorities. It was made abundantly clear that the union could expect a period of harassment until the vote was reversed. They stated that "a disaffiliation from the CST was tantamount to counter-revolutionary activities."
- March 15, 1982 — The Sandinista government declared a "State of National Emergency" during which the regime is to have extraordinary powers, including the right to detain and jail persons indefinitely without having proved that they committed any crime. The right of *habeas corpus* is suspended. Under this decree, strikes continue to be banned, no collective contracts may be signed, and no trade union demonstrations or public meetings are allowed. However, these restrictions are not enforced against unions affiliated with the Sandinista Confederation (CST).
- March-April 1982 — Forty CTN activists were detained by police and interrogated for days at a time. Three members of the CTN Executive Committee receive death threats.
- May 17, 1982 — Armed men invade the headquarters of the CTN labor confederation and rifle the archives containing mailing lists and accounting records.
- August 17, 1982 — Peasant leaders of Jalapa are arrested and remain imprisoned through the Spring of 1983.
- In the first week of November 1982, an ICFTU mission composed of the following members visited Nicaragua:

Tulio Cuevas, ORIT Secretary General and head of the delegation

Enzo Friso, Director, Inter-American Affairs, ICFTU

Claudio Artavia Artavia, General Secretary, Central American Confederation of Workers

Frank Drozak, Vice-President, AFL-CIO (U.S.A.)

William C. Doherty, Jr., Director, AIFLD/AFL-CIO

Richard Mercier, Vice-President, CLC, Canada

John Harker, Director, International Affairs Department, CLC, Canada

Emilio Gabaglio, Director, International Affairs Department, CISL, Italy

Per Carlsen, representing the Nordic Council of Trade Unions.

The mission held talks with the Minister of Labor, Mr. Virgilio Godoy, and with members of the Committee on Human Rights, the "Coordinadora Democratica" (representatives of political parties and professional associations); Mr. Rafael Cordova, a member of the governing Junta; Victor Tirado Lopez, Commander of the Revolution; the leaders of the "Coordinadora Sindical de Nicaragua" and, finally, the leaders of CUS, the ICFTU affiliate.

In the course of these various interviews, and particularly with the Minister of Labor, the delegation stressed the desire and commitment of the international free trade union movement to support in Nicaragua — just as in any other country in the world — the respect for ILO Conventions on trade union rights, within the framework of a free, democratic and pluralistic society, which is the only way in which real trade union rights may be guaranteed. The mission also emphasized that the trade union unity of the working class, which is the goal of every authentic trade unionist, must not, however, be imposed by any authority, but must emerge as the result of the will of the workers themselves.

The mission furthermore pointed out that the international free trade union movement enthusiastically supported the people of Nicaragua in their victorious battle against the cruel Somoza regime and also the Sandinista Revolutionary Government which was set up after the liberation of the country.

The mission complained about the very repressive acts, including imprisonment, committed against CUS — an ICFTU affiliate — and its leaders, and, since acts of this nature were continually occurring, the ICFTU had been forced to lodge complaints with the ILO in the hope that the government would review its attitude and respect the international conventions.

In very frank and cordial talks, the Minister of Labor assured the delegation that the Government of Nicaragua intended to fulfill the obligations deriving from the ILO conventions.

Unfortunately, the Sandinista government continued to interpret freedom of association as the "freedom" of workers to affiliate to the Sandinista Confederation (CST) . . . or else.

After the ICFTU visit, the repressions were of a more serious nature and began to occur more often.

- November 20-21, 1982 — The National Confederation of Workers (CTN) convened in the city of Managua in order to discuss the turn of events in the country. The congress made public its deep concern about the deterioration of the freedoms in the country, denouncing "before our citizens and before the world all the abuses that have been heaped upon us by the military in power, such as the case of our trade union brothers Eugenio Membreno, Numan Caideron, Miguel Salcedo, Victoriano Ramos, Nicolas Gonzalez, Ramon Gonzalez, Saturnino Lopez Centeno, his daughter, Heriberto Rodriguez, Santos Jimenez, Bernabe Larios Morga, Santos Larios Cornejo, Evelio Larios Cornejo, Jose Moreno Davila, Monico Fuentes, Abel Lopez, Jose Moreno, Agustin Canales, Santos Guerrero, and Santos Ponce Santacruz, who had been arrested without justifiable cause."

The AFL-CIO has just received notification that, as of February 20, 1984, the following labor leaders remain in jail:

Anastasio Jimenez Maldonado
arrested October 1982
Gabriel Jimenez Maldonado
arrested October 1982
Saturnino Lopez Centeno
arrested October 1982
Alejo Flores Castillo
arrested December 1982
Candido Arbigu Ocon
arrested December 1982
Candelario Jarquin Miranda
arrested December 1982
Ricardo Mejia Salgado
arrested December 1982
Esteban Orozco Martinez
arrested December 1982
Anacleto Razo Torres
arrested December 1982
Nicolas Orozco Martinez
arrested December 1982
Stanislao Cano Mayorga
arrested December 1982

- February 1983 — Three more CNT leaders are arrested in Matagalpa and were held for four months without being charged.
- March 21, 1983 — The Port Workers Union of Corinto, representing 1800 workers, formally announced that it was leaving the Sandinista Confederation (CST) and affiliating to the ICFTU affiliate CUS.

On March 22, a Sandinista security force arrived at union headquarters and assaulted the members and took many to jail. The following message was sent to Dr. Edmundo Vargas, Director of the Human Rights Department of the Organization of American States, and Martin Ennols of Amnesty International:

> We denounce the trade union related repression against members of the dock workers union of Corinto. A score of armed mobs backed by governmental authorities engaged in a violent physical confrontation with defenseless workers to prevent them from disaffiliating from the

(Continued on page 8)

NICARAGUA

(Continued from page 3)

official trade union central organization and to affiliate to the Confederation of Trade Union Unity (CUS). Alejandro Arnuero Martinez, Julio Solis Samayoa, Jorge Gutierrez Medrano, Jose Gomez Novoa, Francisco Davila Mendoza, Guillermo Salmeron Jimenez and Crescencio Carranza, dock workers and leaders of their union have been arrested; seven others had their dock workers cards destroyed, which resulted in their unjustified dismissal for absenteeism, and some two hundred and sixty workers are on the black list, being threatened with dismissal by the company that runs the dock operations in Corinto.

We would appreciate your good offices before the Nicaraguan Government to ensure that further and serious reprisals of this kind do not take place.

Martha P. Baltodano
National Coordinator
Permanent Commission on
Human Rights, Nicaragua

- June 1983 — The ICFTU Congress in Oslo confirmed its protest to the ILO regarding the violation of Convention #87 by the Sandinista regime because of its repeated infringement of workers' rights. The Sandinista repression of the Corinto Port Workers Union, an ICFTU affiliate, was cited as a particularly flagrant example.

- July 18, 1983 — Estela Palaviccini, the "secretary of Vigilancia" of the Checkers' Union of Corinto was arrested and then released. She was arrested for a second time on October 10 and tortured. She was then found innocent and released only to be informed that she no longer had a job; one more person added to the black list of dissenting democratic trade unionists.

- July 1983 — Jose Miranda Wilford, secretary general of the Radio Workers union, is imprisoned when he opposes the forced affiliation of his union to the CST. He remains in jail.

- December 1983 — The house of Carlos Huembes, Secretary General of the CTN, was besieged by members of the Sandinista Popular Militia for several days during the month of December. During their routine military exercises, more than one hundred "milicianos" (militia men) would pause in front of the house for a period of approximately three hours shouting slogans such as "Counter Revolutionary, go to Miami!" On one occasion, while the troops were demonstrating in front of the house, one of Brother Huembe's daughters suffered a nervous breakdown that required the services of a doctor.

- 1984 — The beginning of the new year saw no change in the tactics of the Sandinista Junta and all of its related organizations. While its leaders were on a public relations program for peace throughout the U.S. and the world, the parade of democratic trade unionists going to the jails of the country continued and the job black list kept growing longer.

- January 25, 1984 — Aristides Morales Martinez, former secretary general of the SITRAVOCHI union in Chinandega was arrested in the middle of the night, reminiscent of the tactics of the Somoza Security Force. His crime? He dared to defend the free trade union precepts of CUS.

- January 28, 1984 — Alfonso Davila, a member of the Faustino Martinez union in the San Antonio Sugar Mill, was arrested for distributing the CUS monthly labor information bulletin, "Solidaridad." He was taken to a jail in Chinandega and held *incommunicado.*

- In mid-February 1984, five thousand (5,000) sugar cane workers at the San Antonio Sugar Mill complex went on strike for three days to protest the government-imposed labor agreement. The sugar estates and refinery are the largest privately-owned enterprise in Nicaragua, yielding over half of the country's sugar production and most of its rum ("Flor de Cana"). A spokesman for the Pellas family, which owns San Antonio, said that they could have given larger raises, but the Labor Ministry imposed a ceiling.

The workers who belonged to the Ronaldo Altamiro Revolutionary Union affiliated to the Sandinista Confederation (CST), turned their backs on the CST leadership and demanded higher wage increases. The strike was successful, the workers received a higher increase and, as Luis Francisco Pena, a cane cutter who has been in the fields 35 years put it, "This was a work stoppage because of hunger. We have to insist on our rights as workers. This isn't a political affair; this is a work affair. Our life is very difficult." As a consequence of this strike, the leadership of the refinery workers union (a CUS affiliate) were set upon as agitators. The FSLN regards the San Antonio operation as very important and has been angry that the workers are represented by a CUS union. It has shown its displeasure by refusing to confer legal status ("personeria juridica") on the union for the last three years. Normally, legal status is conferred in weeks.

The union leaders have again been detained and at least one has been threatened with death if he does not sever his contacts with the CUS.

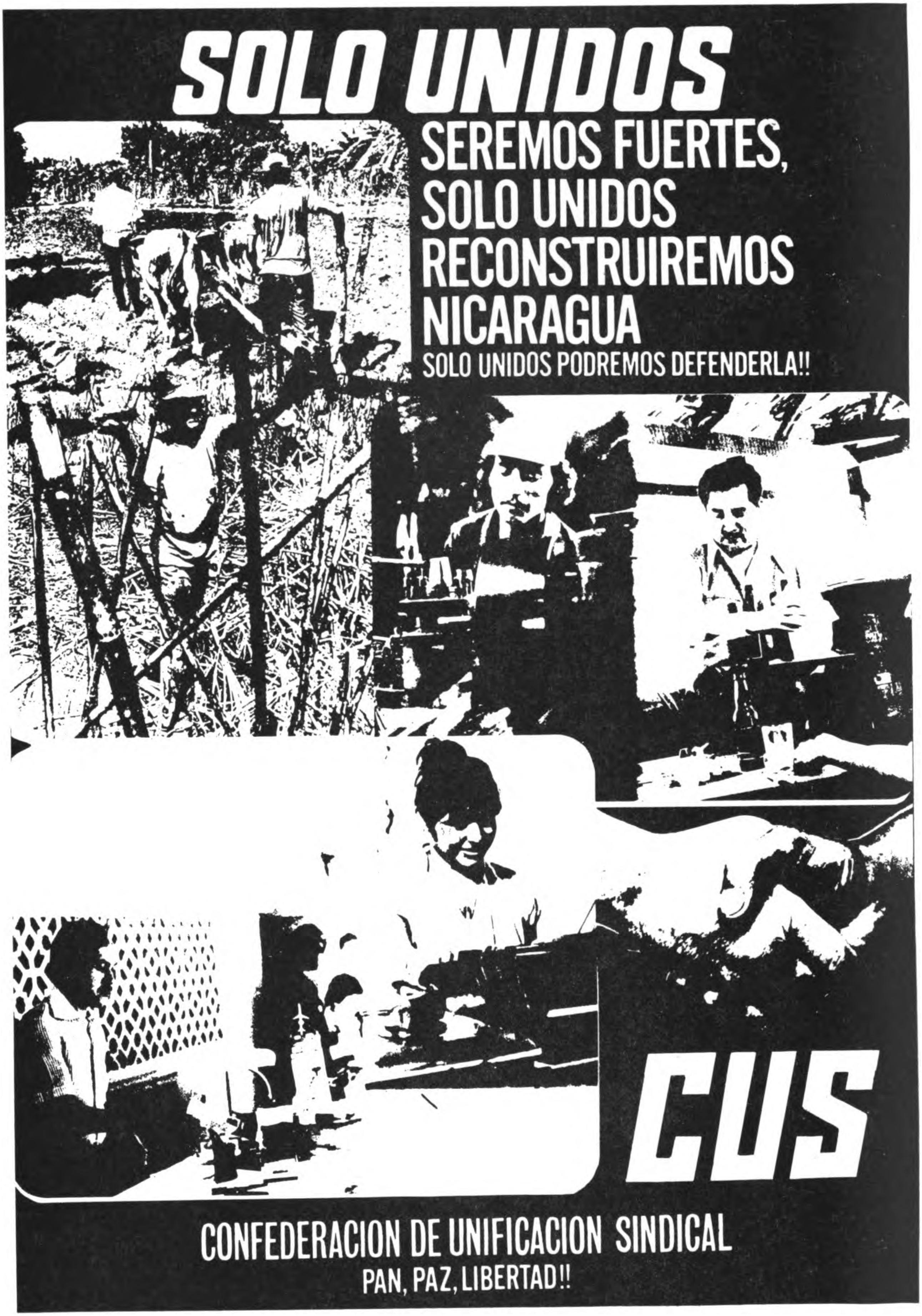
- March 1, 1984—The CTN distributed a pamphlet titled "Information of Union Violations, 1983—A Reality behind the Barbed Wire of the FSLN." The pamphlet lists names, places, and describes incidents that transpired in 1983. There are over one hundred violations of human and trade union rights.

- March 15, 1984—A telegram was received from the ORIT offices in Mexico City. It said that Brother German Saul Solis, recording secretary of the Port Workers of Corinto, arrived in Mexico City March 13 after buying his way across the border, and is in dire straits. He was one of the leaders jailed in March 1983, dismissed from his job and eventually blacklisted. No one would hire him, and he barely survived by doing odd jobs wherever he went. He finally had to leave, and is now in Mexico asking for assistance.

* * *

The above documentation can best be summarized by the words of a Nicaraguan labor leader in exile: "For twenty years we had fought against the Somoza nightmare. Our resistance, bent at times, was never broken. We denounced the harassments, tortures and human and trade union rights violations. The price we paid was more torture, jailings, dismissal from jobs, and death. Finally our struggle was over and the Somoza dictatorship overthrown and we thought that eveverything we fought for would now become a reality.

"Four and one-half years after the takeover by the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN), the democratic labor movement finds itself in a very serious predicament. We never dreamed that our labor leaders and workers would be put in jail again in great numbers; we never dreamed that the campaign by the government against our movement would be so vicious; we never dreamed that our workers and their families would be brought to ridicule by some long-time friends and neighbors, who now serve on block committees for the defense of the revolution, and it was beyond our wildest dreams that we would be asking once again about the '*desaparecidos*' (the missing)." ■


SOLO UNIDOS
SEREMOS FUERTES,
SOLO UNIDOS
RECONSTRUIREMOS
NICARAGUA
SOLO UNIDOS PODREMOS DEFENDERLA!!
CUS
CONFEDERACION DE UNIFICACION SINDICAL
PAN, PAZ, LIBERTAD!!

Poster used by the CUS in Nicaragua

Annex 10

Superior Council of Private Enterprise Letter
October 1981

The following document is a translation of a letter sent in October 1981 by the leaders of the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP)—the private sector umbrella group representing tens of thousands of Nicaraguan business representatives, merchants, farmers, ranchers, and professionals—to the Sandinista-controlled junta protesting the adoption of Marxist policies. The Sandinistas, incensed by the letter, arrested the president of COSEP and several other signatories; for having committed no other "crime" than writing this letter, the signatories were held in prison for five months.

Managua
October 19, 1981

Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra
Coordinator of the Junta of the
Government of National Reconstruction

The boards of directors of the private sector, members of COSEP, having met at a special session on this date, have decided to submit to the governing junta the following considerations:

Over 2 years have passed since the victory of the Nicaraguan people over the Somoza regime. During this period, we have seen the advance of a government project quite different from that drafted in the program of the Government of National Reconstruction. We have analyzed the process of changes; we have pointed to the dangers of the course through which you want to lead the revolution. We have felt the indifference of the government to our recommendations and we have witnessed a long parade of foreigners, many of whom carry messages alien to our nationality.

The national economy is crumbling, production shows no signs of recovery, social peace is not yet a reality, the country falls deeper in debt in an endless spiral and the mixed economy announced by the government retreats before the advance of property nationalization, uncovering a project designed behind the peoples' back.

Considering the government's domestic and foreign policies enforced by the rulers of the country, we find an unmistakable Marxist-Leninist ideological line, confirmed by the speeches of members of the national leadership. The actions of the members of this government and their speeches here and abroad reveal the purpose of engaging in an international ideology campaign which has submerged us in almost total isolation from those sister nations who in the beginning supported the true Nicaraguan revolution. Apparently, the government no longer cares about the support of nations like Costa Rica or Venezuela; instead, it prefers the support of countries like Libya and Cuba, which places us within a clearly defined alignment and exposes us to suffer the consequences of such an alignment.

The statements of members of the government before international forums appear to conform more to international Marxist-Leninist movements than to the principles which inspired and which should be the guidelines of this revolution. Recently, the Defense Minister and member of the FSLN national leadership, Commander Humberto Ortega, said that it was necessary for the people to prepare a list of persons, potential counterrevolutionaries; that those who consciously or unconsciously—namely non-Communist Nicaraguans—support the imperialist plans, and who fail to join the defense whenever the attack takes place, will be the first to appear hanging along the roads and highways of the country.

The Defense Minister's statements, later confirmed by Dr. Sergio Ramirez Mercado, of the junta of the Government of National Reconstruction, indicate the start of a project whose consequences cannot be predicted. Worse yet is the fact that such statements can only be interpreted as the preparation of a new genocide in Nicaragua for exercising the right to dissent.

We are at the threshold of the destruction of Nicaragua; we are reaching a point of no return from which this government will hardly be able to claim its legitimacy before the people. The nationalism of an entire nation is being threatened by the internationalism of a radical and fanatical minority.

Portions of the pronouncement of the FSLN national leadership on October 16 of this year could be considered most positive if the concepts of such a pronouncement should influence the works and attitudes of the members of that national leadership. This pronouncement, however, accentuates the marked ambiguity that characterizes this government.

What is the use of appealing to all sectors if whenever you deem it necessary, you brand these named sectors as traitors? What is the use of proclaiming a mixed economy if companies continue to be illegally confiscated? What is the use of proclaiming guarantees to freedom of the press if the communications media continue to be shut down?

What is the use of proclaiming political pluralism if the political parties are banned from holding peaceful meetings through the use of the divine mobs [*turbas divinas*]—to use your own words—taking over the country in a display of chaos and violence? What is the use of claiming to guarantee ideological pluralism if the actions of the independent unions are obstructed and their leaders arrested? What is the use of claiming to guarantee the physical integrity of persons if the Defense Minister threatens to hang people? What is the use of affirming support for the economic efforts of the Central American governments if the rulers of these same countries are antagonized and called gorillas by leadership members? What is the use of proclaiming respect of human rights if laws are enacted restricting these rights?

It is necessary to understand that those you call domestic or foreign reactionaries are not against the Nicaraguan people but against the Marxist-Leninist project you are imposing behind the people's back. That is the reason we are being isolated by other countries, and that is the reason we are opposed to the project.

Let it be very clearly established before you and before history that the Nicaraguan private sector supported and shall continue to support the legitimate Nicaraguan revolution as it is contemplated in the program of the Government of National Reconstruction. In no way, however, does it support the plans to change this revolution into a Marxist-Leninist adventure which will only bring more bloodshed and suffering to our people.

Such is the truth, regardless of insults or threats, as seen by many nations of the world who supported us wholeheartedly at the beginning but who now observe us with distrust and are alarmed by the behavior of this government and its ideological tint.

We hope and pray to God that there is still time to amend the errors and that you may so understand.

Attentively,

[signed] COSEP;
Nicaraguan Development Institute,
  INDE;
Confederation of Nicaraguan
  Chambers of Commerce;
Nicaraguan Chamber of Industries;
Nicaraguan Chamber of Construction;
Confederation of Professional
  Associations of Nicaragua,
  CONAPRO;
Union of Nicaraguan Agricultural-
  Livestock Producers, UPANIC.

Annex 11

The Miskito Indians

The Sandinistas' abuse of the indigenous people of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast is well known and has been widely condemned.

The first document is an excerpt from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 1984 *Report on the Situation of Human Rights of a Segment of the Nicaraguan Population of Miskito Origin* containing a February 1982 complaint by the Indian organization Misurasata. (Part I (D)(2) of the *Report.*)

The second and third documents are reports by Professor Bernard Nietschmann of the Department of Geography, University of California (Berkeley), who has done extensive research into the situation of Nicaragua's Indian peoples. One is an October 1983 statement by Professor Nietschmann before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The other is an article by Professor Nietschmann in *Indian War and Peace with Nicaragua,* Center for World Indigenous Studies, Snoqualmie, Washington, 1985.

The final two documents deal with the case of Eduardo Pantin, a leader of the MISURA Indian organization fighting the Sandinistas in northern Zelaya. In June 1985, Pantin died under mysterious circumstances while conducting peace talks with Sandinista officials. One document is a translation of an article in the pro-FSLN *El Nuevo Diario* reporting Minister of Interior Tomas Borge's claim that Pantin had been killed as part of a CIA effort to block the peace talks. When information about Pantin's death surfaced that showed Borge's assertion to be false, the Sandinistas produced a different explanation. The other document is a letter from Vice Minister of Interior Luis Carrion to Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts providing this new version of Pantin's death. According to Carrion, Pantin was fatally wounded by an accidental discharge from his own pistol which he dropped while getting out of a hammock. (See a news release issued by the Senator's office on July 31, 1985.)

The Misurasata Complaint to
The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
February 1982

Events of December 1981

a. On December 23, the Sandinista Air Force bombarded the Indian communities of Asang and San Carlos, located on the banks of the upper Coco River, with "Push and Pull" airplanes and helicopters, killing 60 Indian brothers with 80-lb bombs. Fifteen brothers were taken prisoner from San Carlos in the direction of Waspan or Puerto Cabezas, and among them were: Rev. Higinio Morazan (the community's Moravian minister), Juan Saballos, Julián Mansanares, Noel Wellington, Balandor Barrow, Manuel Saballos, Juan Charles, Alberto Zelaya, and Elsa Barrow.

A military air base and 82 members of the Sandinista Army were installed in Asang. San Carlos received reinforcements of 150 troops, with some Cubans among them. Both communities were militarized to prevent the populations from fleeing to Honduras. The soldiers take away the Indians' food, force them to dig trenches, and forbid them to leave their communities in search of food and other necessities.

b. In Leimus, close to Waspan, 80 brothers from Asang, San Carlos, Waspuk, Krasa, etc., were captured on December 22, as they prepared to travel to their respective communities from Waspan, Puerto Cabezas and Managua in order to spend Christmas and the New Year with their relatives (a Miskito custom). The next night (December 23), the army killed 35 of them, and buried them together in a single grave. Some of those killed were: Norma, Rogelio and Seimeón Castro, Joselín and Asel Mercado, Cristina and Mayra Lacayo, Víctor and Carlos Pérez, Justo Martínez, Villanor Pantin, Roseno Gómez, Luis Fajardo, Efraín Poveda, Celso Flores, Ramiro Damasio, etc. The wives of these brothers were raped by the soldiers from Leimus and later forced to go to their communities. On the 24th, twelve (12) brothers were thrown into the Coco River and killed. On the 26th, four (4) brothers were buried alive near Leimus. The whereabouts of the remaining 80 brothers taken prisoner are unknown. The military base in Leimus runs a concentration camp and a forced labor program for prisoners.

c. In Bluefields, on December 26, 30 Criollos, Indians and Mestizos were imprisoned without any charges. A civilian Criollo was seriously wounded by a soldier for resisting forced recruitment into the Sandinista Army.

d. In the Raudales communites (Raiti, Aniwás, Walakitán, Bokay, etc.) along the Coco River, Indians who are part of the Sandinista Army are thrown into the river with their hands and feet tied for refusing to take part in the massacre of their brothers in those communities. The corpses of many of these military brothers can be found in the communities of Siksayaru and Andristara. In each of the communities of this zone, there are concentrations of from 100 to 300 soldiers.

Events of January 1982

a. On January 7, 300 soldiers appeared in the Sandy Bay Tara community, repressed the people, militarized the community, and took 40 prisoners to Puerto Cabezas. Many Indians were forced to abandon their community and flee to the mountains.

b. In the Bilwaskarma community of Río Coco, the Moravian Hospital (the only in the area), was closed and converted into a command headquarters for the army. The community was militarized, and dozens of brothers were taken prisoner, among them, Bárbara Díaz (a nurse in the hospital and the daughter of the minister of the community's Moravian Church).

c. In the community of Uhri, down-river on the River Coco, six (6) bombs were dropped by a Push and Pull airplane belonging to the Sandinista Army, thus forcing the population to take refuge on the Honduran side.

As a result of the events of Leimus and of Asang-San Carlos, the militarization and bombardment of communities, the capture and massive repression of the Indians, persecution of church and communal leaders, and the constant military threat to exterminate the Indian race, thousands of brothers from the Río Coco communities fled to Honduras after December 23, joining those who had gone to that country a year earlier. Nearly 6,000 Indians from more than 20 entire communities are already in Honduras; among them, are the Siksayari, Andristara, Karisal, Santa Isabel, Krasa, Taniska, San Sang, Kitaski, Krinkrinkia, Pilpilia, Namahka, Winwika, Paliyuhmba (Esperanza), Isulibila (Santa Fe), Wirapahni (San Alberto), Pransa, Nasuni (San Jerónimo), Ipritingni, Bulsirpi, Lakuntara, Wiswis, Nilwas, Uhri. It should be noted that the brothers of these communities left empty-handed, abandoning their homes, their livestock and their other belongings because of the prevailing situation in the region.

Recent Events

The FSLN is carrying out an intense political propaganda campaign urging the refugee brothers in Honduras to return to their respective communities, since they know that the refugees have suffered hunger and sickness in that country, and the FSLN is offering food, medicine, doctors, and every kind of assistance. They say that those who kill and oppress the Indians are the Somocistas or the counterrevolutionaries (??) and to pay no attention to the lies of other groups. But the Indian people is not to be deceived; they know nothing of the existence of such alleged anti-Sandinista armed groups, but they experienced the oppression and bombardment of their communities, the mass killings of their brothers by the soldiers of Sandinismo. What is ironic in this FSLN campaign is that while their propaganda makes an effort to persuade on the basis of lies, their military sets fire to communities, expropriates the livestock and property of the refugees, and forces the few families who remained in the communities to move to another area as alleged refugees.

Beginning on January 11, the military began to burn houses, temples and schools in the communities of Irpitingni, Pransa, El Carmen, Lakun Tara, Bulsirpi, San Jerónimo, Wirapahni, etc.

Also, the livestock (cows and horses) of these communities are being given over to the INRA (Nicaraguan Institute for Agrarian Reform) and they are then used to feed these same officers (who have red meat daily).

In some communities, such as Sante Fe (Isulibila), Esperanza (Paliyuhmpa) and San Jerónimo (Nasuni) where a few Indian families still remained, the Armed Forces of Sandinismo have forced them to abandon their communities and move to the Tasba Raya area as supposed refugees, under the pretext of protecting them from Somocista and counterrevolutionary groups.

MISURASATA denounces to the world the ethnocide of its Indians by the Sandinista regime, the massacres at Leimus and Asang-San Carlos, the dozens of prisoners from San Carlos, Sandy Bay Tara, Bluefields, Bilwaskarma, and Leimus, the bombardment and burning of the communities of the Coco River, the expropriation of the livestock and other property of the Indian refugees, the persecution of the leaders of the churches and communities, the decision to annihilate the Indian race, the militarization of the communities and especially the defamation campaign to denigrate the authentic struggle of our Indian peoples for their lands and autonomy, which links them to the Somocista or counterrevolutionary groups. We repeat that the Somocistas have always been the enemies of our Indian peoples and we believe that no counterrevolutionary group represents the interests of the Indians of MISURASATA, so that the Indian struggle can in no way be related to the interests of these unknown groups. We denounce that the FSLN, while lacking grounds and fair arguments in the face of the claim of our Indian peoples for the defense of their historical rights, has launched this slanderous campaign to continue to deny us our ancestral rights and in order to exterminate the Nicaraguan Indian race.

Statement Before the Organization of American States Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, on the Situation of the Indians in Nicaragua, Presented by Bernard Nietschmann, October 3, 1983

I want to thank the Commission for the opportunity to testify today.

I am a professor of geography at the University of California, Berkeley. My research and teaching specialties are indigenous peoples, resource use, customary land and sea rights, and tropical resources. I have done research on these subjects in various parts of the world including Nicaragua, Polynesia, Micronesia, and Australia.

Between 1968 and 1976 I spent 2½ years in eastern Nicaragua in Miskito villages. I lived for varying lengths of time in several villages and visited communities from Bluefields north to Old Cape and from the lower Río Coco up to as far west as Raiti.

I was supportive of the overthrow of the Somoza regime and the establishment of the new government and looked forward to a new and beneficial government policy toward the East Coast Indian peoples.

In 1980 I went to Nicaragua at the invitation of the Sandinista government to advise on and promote the possibility of establishing a national marine park off northeastern Nicaragua that would serve to protect various marine species and habitats and to provide sustainable resources for coastal Miskito communities who would manage and oversee many aspects of the proposed park.

I kept up frequent mail contact with Miskitos in various villages over the years even though my research took me to other parts of the world. In 1981 the mail from these correspondents suddenly ceased and I received no replies to my letters.

After two years of silence I heard again from some of my old acquaintances who called and wrote from Costa Rica. They were refugees and told me they had had to flee from their villages to seek safety in Costa Rica. They feared for their lives in Nicaragua. Some of these people were men of more than 60 years of age, others were women who came with children.

I went to Costa Rica at the first opportunity to see these people and to learn what had happened to them and in their villages since I'd last visited the East Coast of Nicaragua.

Examination of the Information

I have just returned after spending 2½ months in Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua. I carried out research using standard systematic techniques of formal interviews, informal discussions, crosschecking, corroboration and obtaining multiple confirmations to establish the validity and reliability of the information—the same techniques that I would use to obtain and verify information that forms the basis of research results presented in scholarly books and articles. A tape recording, film and photographic record was made.

I visited old acquaintances some of whom I've known for 15 years and who are now in refugee camps, or are unregistered refugees, or are in exile. Their stories appeared to be consistent and were confirmed by others I met who were scattered about in Costa Rica and Honduras. And their stories were alarming.

Miskito villages in eastern Nicaragua had long been closed by the Sandinista government to independent outside observers. I had the opportunity to go inside Nicaragua with the invitation from the Miskito, Sumo and Rama Nations to visit their territory. I was in a Miskito area in eastern Nicaragua for several weeks. I traveled from village to village, staying for varying lengths of time depending on security considerations. I talked to hundreds of people, lived with them, ate what they were barely managing to live on, experienced the conditions, met many people I'd known from my previous visits years ago, listened and asked questions, and carried out research on what had happened to them during the years since the 1979 Sandinista revolution.

Because much of the information I obtained might jeopardize individuals and entire communities, I trust you will understand why I cannot provide specific names, places and dates. Nor can I reveal exact details that would give clues to the location of these people and villages because of possible punitive retaliation from the Sandinista military—something that the villagers fear and that I respect and agree with.

I wish to share with you what I found out from the perspective of the Miskito villagers living inside Nicaragua. My interest is to acquaint you with their experiences and their human rights situation. I am not interested in nor have I taken part in the rhetoric that has confused examination of the Miskito situation.

Human Rights Violations

It is with sadness that I report widespread, systematic and arbitrary human rights violations in Miskito Indian communities. These violations by the Sandinista government include arbitrary killings, arrests and interrogations; rapes; torture; continuing forced relocations of village populations; destruction of villages; restriction and prohibition of freedom of travel; prohibition of village food production; restriction and denial of access to basic and necessary store foods; the complete absence of **any** medicine, health care or educational services in many Indian villages; the denial of religious freedom; and the looting of households and sacking of villages.

Arbitrary Killings

In several villages I talked to people who had witnessed the arbitrary killing of Miskito civilians by Sandinista military forces. Many of these killings occurred during one of several Sandinista military invasions and occupations of Indian villages. Some of the villagers were arbitrarily shot when the government soldiers first invaded the villages; others were killed during the weeks of occupation, confinement, torture and interrogation. For example, it was reported to me by several different firsthand sources that one man was nailed through his hands and ankles to a wall and told he would remain there until he either confessed to being a "contra" or died. He died. His widow, dressed in black, and others in that traumatized village are filled with grief and anger over this and other atrocities committed during their forced confinement under a reign of terror by several hundred Sandinista soldiers. Other Miskitos were killed by forcing their heads under water to extract confessions of "counterrevolutionary" activities. Two older men—60 and 63 years of age—were threatened with death unless they confessed to involvement with "contras." They too were finally killed in the course of these same events.

Throughout my notes and tape recording are descriptions of such killings in village after village in the Atlantic Coast Indian region. Descriptions were given to me by wives, daughters, mothers, and other relatives and villagers. The occurrence of arbitrary killings of Miskito civilians appears to be widespread. A pattern is readily seen. Miskito men and women are accused of being contras, tortured or threatened with death unless they confess, killed, and then reported as having been contras, if, indeed, there is any report at all.

Arbitrary Arrests

Many Miskito civilians appear to have been arbitrarily arrested, interrogated and jailed. As with the killings, many of these frequently occur during Sandinista military operations against particular Indian villages. Military occupation of a village is carried out apparently in retaliation after an attack by Miskito warriors either on a distant Sandinista position or on a Sandinista patrol in the region. All of the information I have received leads me to conclude that the Sandinista military has not been able to locate the many basecamps of the Miskito warriors who are operating permanently far inside the Miskito region of eastern Nicaragua. I must stress that these are *not* Indian combatants who must slip across and retreat back across Nicaragua's borders with neighboring states. These Indian combatants or warriors, as they prefer to be called, are Indian men and women who are operating permanently from camps which are hundreds of kilometers from the borders. Their camps are too well hidden to be easily detected and they have generally avoided going into villages so as not to endanger the civilian population. Unable to effectively attack and destroy the warriors, the Sandinistas have attacked the villages and have taken punitive measures against the only Miskitos they can catch—the villagers. Some of these civilians, noncombatants, are accused of being "contras" and then arbitrarily killed, arrested, and tortured.

A recent example of this seemingly frequent violation was the officially announced release of some forty prisoners detained for eleven months after the court found no legal grounds for charges of counterrevolutionary activities. Some of those released are from a community where seven villagers were summarily killed at the time of their arrest. If these released villagers are innocent, were those killed innocent too?

Torture

Civilian Miskitos have been tortured in villages and according to reports which I consider to be very reliable, in jails. I received confirming reports and descriptions from reliable witnesses who saw beatings done by Sandinista military in many villages. I also talked to and photographed people who had been tortured. I was shown scars from what they said were bayonet wounds (a man of 60 years), fingernails pulled out (a man of 48 years), deep scars under fingernails from nails driven in (a man of 52 years). Several men reported that they had been held under water for long periods to extract confessions. Another man had been tied by his feet and hung upside down and beaten repeatedly with sticks. His body still showed evidence of bruises and his shoulders were deformed.

Rapes

Rape by Sandinista soldiers of Miskito girls and women has been common. In one village, for example, six women between the ages of 15 and 42 were raped by the occupying Sandinista soldiers. Two were gang raped. In each community that has experienced a Sandinista military invasion and occupation, women have been raped. Some were held down by soldiers, some were restrained with a bayonet under their neck and then raped. From what the villagers have observed and experienced, Sandinista soldiers are apparently given great freedom to do as they please when they invade an Indian village.

Looting, Sacking of Villages, Confiscation of Property

One of the many things I noticed as being markedly different in Miskito communities was the absence of anything of value. Households had no radios, some had no dishes; more formal clothes usually worn to church on Sundays were absent. This was not the result of the people's poverty or the lack of clothes in stores—although these conditions prevail and are worsening—but are due to the theft of property by Sandinista soldiers. Radios, clothes, gold bracelets, necklaces, and rings had been stripped from the Indian villagers and looted from their houses. Again and again people reported to me that this happened to them when the Sandinistas occupied their villages. Furthermore, the soldiers killed their pigs, cows and chickens for food but did not pay for them.

In several villages, all canoes and diesel-powered boats have been confiscated and taken away. No compensation has been paid. Confiscation of fishing boats and livestock has also meant confiscation of the means of subsistence and livelihood.

Prohibition of Village Food Production

The Miskitos used to produce the majority of their basic food needs; in some communities 70% or more of all they consumed was obtained from their small farms, from fishing in the rivers, lagoons and at sea, and from hunting in the forests and lowland swamps. During the late 1960s and 1970s when I lived in Miskito villages people produced food in sufficient quantities and hunger was very uncommon. At present, hunger is a considerable problem. This is because the Miskitos have been forbidden to go far from their villages to plant. This restriction on freedom of movement is evidently a response to the Sandinistas' fear that the villagers would make contact with Miskito warriors in the bush. The villagers are not permitted to fish because of similar restrictions and the lack of canoes in many villages. They also are not permitted to go hunting because all hunting arms—such as .22 rifles and shotguns—have been confiscated.

In order to limit the availability of food for the Miskito warriors, the Sandinista military has limited and prohibited the production of food by Miskito civilians. To affect one group, another group is made to go hungry.

Locally produced food was in critically short supply in some villages I visited. In other villages in areas protected more securely by Miskito warriors, villagers were beginning to fish again and to plant a few crops even through it was not the most appropriate season to do so.

In those villages where Sandinista occupations have occurred, livestock is conspicuously absent. In one village I visited there was no livestock—no pigs, horses, cows, or even chickens. The villagers said the Sandinistas had machine-gunned all, including 90 cows.

Restriction and Denial of Basic and Necessary Store Foods

In every Miskito village food such as rice, beans, sugar, flour, coffee, salt, and so on has been rationed through a strict system imposed by the Sandinista officials that limited each family to a quota for 15-day periods. For example, in one village this meant that a family of 7 or 8 received 4 pounds of rice every 15 days. The rice would actually last three or four days. The restricted quantity of food imposed a control on the villagers and, it appears, was also meant to limit any food above minimal survival needs so that none would be given to Miskito warriors.

Continuing and growing military actions by Miskito warriors over the past year suggests that restricting civilians' food in order to limit the Miskito warriors' food supply has not worked.

Recently the Sandinistas have cut off all supplies of food they used to send to the villages in a large part of the Indian region. Staple foods such as rice, beans, flour, sugar, and so on, are no longer being supplied. None of these items had been received for many weeks in several villages I toured. People were living primarily on green coconuts and the oil and pulp they sucked from hone palm seeds. These foods do not provide even minimal nutritional requirements.

No food is being sent into villages and the people have not produced food from local sources because of preexisting prohibitions. Many are slowly starving.

Medicine, Health Care, Education

Western medicine and health care was completely absent from every village that I went to. There was no medicine. None. According to villagers the lack of medicine and access to health care has been going on for one and two years. As a result, severe health and medical problems are common. Malaria is rampant, dysentery and intestinal parasites are common, and tuberculosis is widespread. All of these medical problems could be greatly reduced with well known and relatively inexpensive medicines. But these medicines are not available in many Indian villages, and villagers who have managed to walk to distant towns where there are doctors are forbidden to bring back medicine for other villagers. A Miskito villager who becomes ill must be well enough to walk to a doctor if he is to have any hope of securing medical help. Otherwise, he must go without or use only traditional plant medicines obtained from the forests. These traditional medicines sometimes work but are not effective against many medical problems and diseases.

If the Sandinista government policy is to deny the villagers medicine in order to prevent Miskito warriors from having access to it, their strategy is not working. I have reliable information that it is the Miskito warriors who give medicine to the villagers.

Schools were closed in every village I went to and had been for months, sometimes years.

The medical and educational achievement in rural areas so often publicized by the Sandinista government are conspicuously absent from the Miskito area

I traveled through. And I traveled through a large area.

Denial of Religious Freedom

Only in those villages now under the protection of Miskito warriors are religious services being held. For some villages I visited, that protection had only recently been secured. And even in this large zone many villages cannot hold church services because their religious leaders are in jail or are in exile in Honduras or Costa Rica.

During the Sandinista military occupations of villages churches have commonly been used as jails, to detain men and women accused or suspected of counterrevolutionary activities. Churches have also been used to house the Sandinista soldiers. Bibles and hymn books have been destroyed. Villagers accuse the Sandinista soldiers of defecating and urinating in the churches. There are many credible reports of these activities. I heard reports of churches that had been burned elsewhere in Indian communities, but in the areas I visited I saw no churches that had been destroyed.

In response to this policy many thousands of Indians have already fled Nicaragua to Honduras and Costa Rica. This flight is still continuing. While I was recently in Costa Rica the entire Miskito village of Set Net arrived and asked for protection from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

Others have stayed within the country and have struggled to survive under these harsh conditions or have actively joined in armed resistance. There has been terror and serious trauma in many villages yet the result has not been submission to Sandinista authority. Rather, the killings, torture, violence, rapes, looting and denial of basic needs appears from all available evidence to have served to further unite the Indian communities in their opposition to the Sandinista government. The influence of the Indian warriors and the territory over which they have strong military control is growing.

The story of what has happened to the Miskito Indians in eastern Nicaragua (and to the Sumo and Rama) that has so long been hidden by denials or by excuses that shift blame to outside influences will come out. There is simply too much evidence, too many people have been affected, and too many lives have been lost. From their violations of the human rights of Indian peoples, the Sandinistas have created a people in rebellion, Indian peoples united against them. United because of internal not external reasons. United because of what has happened to them at the hands of the Sandinistas.

This is but a brief summary of some of my findings. More elaboration and documentation will be provided in articles that I am beginning to prepare for publication.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to present this information.

The Miskitos are a very religious people, and they have suffered greatly from the denial of their freedom of religion. In almost all of my discussions with hundreds of Miskito men and women, this was a principal grievance they reported to me.

Continuing Forced Relocations of Village Populations

While I was in the Miskito communities I heard reports that villagers northwest of Puerto Cabezas had been relocated to the area around Sisin. The villages mentioned to me include Auya Pini, Santa Marta, Kwakwil, Boomsirpi, and Sangnilaya. The Commission should investigate to see if these reports are true.

Recently, reports from inside Nicaragua have also been received that the communities of Dakban, Karata and Wawa (all in a 10 to 20 mile radius of Puerto Cabezas) have been relocated.

I was not able to independently verify these recent relocations of village populations.

Miskito leaders inside Nicaragua claim to have knowledge of a Sandinista government plan to relocate villagers from the coastal communities of Wawa south to Tasbapauni to some still unknown resettlement site. This information is said to come from sources within the government. It appears that these sources have proved reliable in the past, including the recent past, and there is strong indication that Wawa has already been relocated. If confirmed, this information shows a government policy to relocate Indian villages south of Puerto Cabezas, villages which are over a hundred kilometers from the Honduran border.

Indian Nations and the Nicaraguan State

By Professor Bernard Nietschmann
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The armed conflict of the Miskito, Sumo and Rama Nations, and the Creole peoples with the Nicaraguan state has been the subject of Misurasata-Sandinista negotiations since December 1984. More than 30 Indian leaders came to the talks to observe the only negotiations in the Americas between a state and armed Indian nations. Russell Means of the American Indian Movement (AIM) declared this war and the Indian peace initiative "to be the most important thing happening to Indian peoples at this time anywhere. It is beyond the colonizers' comprehension."

To the Indian nations, the Nicaraguan state is a superpower that has invaded and expropriated their lands, forcibly imposed foreign controls, and denied Indian peoples any rights to territory, resources, or freedom to pursue their own ways of life. The Indian war seeks to remove the Sandinista state from Indian lands and communities. John Mohawk (Six Nations Confederacy) has followed the war from the start and says "The Nicaraguans go through all sorts of gyrations to hide the facts that their people have invaded the coast, and that they look different, talk different, are in a different place—not their home, and are there with guns. I call this imperialism. What do you call it?"

The Miskito, Sumo and Rama peoples have never lost or given away their sovereignty, territory or rights of self-determination. In order to incorporate Indian lands and peoples into the new Nicaraguan state, the Sandinistas claim that the Indians are Nicaraguan citizens—not distinct peoples—who as ethnic groups are but a small minority of the national population. Misurasata leader Brooklyn Rivera told the Santinistas, "Ethnic groups run restaurants. We have an army. We are a people. We want self-determination."

Latin America is also Indian America. Frontiers are being reversed. The Miskito, Sumo and Rama are the only peoples in the Americas to experience and reject both extremes of European economics and politics: Capitalism and dictatorship under Somoza, and Marxism and dictatorship under the Sandinistas. Their Fourth World revolution is determined to free their nations from occupation by colonialists, imperialists, capitalists, or Marxists.

Indian objectives in the war and in the negotiations are the same: 1) A pullback of Sandinista military forces from Indian lands and communities which would end the shooting war; 2) A withdrawal of Sandinista state institutions (DGSE *[Nicaraguan State Security]*, CDS *[Neighborhood Defense Committees]*, ATC *[Labor Unions]*, ENABAS *[Nicaraguan State Stores]*, MINT *[Ministry of Interior]*, etc.) and personnel from Indian nations which would end the institutional repression; 3) An expansion of the Indian defensive force to protect Indian peoples and their territories; 4) Bring home the 20,000 to 25,000 Indians being held in state resettlement camps, and the 25,000 in refugee camps and in exile in Honduras and Costa Rica; 5) Rebuild the more than 100 destroyed communities; and 6) Obtain external recognition of the Miskito, Sumo and Rama as peoples with sovereign and inalienable rights over their nations, communities, lands, waters, and surface and subsurface resources.

During almost six years of occupation and six months of negotiations, the Sandinistas have refused to accept the Indians' right to self-determination over their own nations and resources. Instead, Managua asserts its power to force Sandinista-determination over Indian nations with claims of "national sovereignty," "national security," and "national resources." Indians who resist the invasion and takeover are labeled "counterrevolutionaries," and those who organized to defend Indian rights and lands were arrested as "separatists" and "CIA mercenaries."

Hardly revolutionary, the Sandinista state's invasion, occupation, confiscation and repression are but racist and supremacist brutalities unleashed by many Third World states—the new colonialists—against indigenous nations. In this, distinctions are erased between Nicaragua and the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma, Ethiopia, Morocco, Sri Lanka, and Guatemala.

The two Indian organizations—Misurasata and Misura, and their combined Frente Interno military forces, seek co-existence between indigenous nations and the state, such as is evolving between the San Blas Kuna and Panama, and the Inuit and Denmark. The Indians call this autonomy, the Sandinistas call it counterrevolutionary.

The Sandinistas appear to be organizing their own "Indian autonomy," possibly to be modeled on the Soviet example. In February 1985, Managua sent two Sandinista Miskitos (Armando Rojas and Fornes Rabonias) to Moscow and Lithuania to study the

Soviet system of ethnic autonomy. If the Sandinistas continue to draw upon repressive foreign models to control Indian peoples, they will but prolong, not end the war.

The Sandinista state has ignored and rebuffed offers of Indian leaders who seek to help promote a solution to the crisis through recognition of indigenous rights. At the Bogotá II negotiations in March 1985, Sandinista delegation head Luis Carriòn said that the presence of Indian observers (American Indian Movement, Haudenosaunee, National Indian Youth Council, Winnebago Nation, World Council of Indigenous Peoples, and Indian representatives from Colombia, Ecuador and Peru), "was a threat to the sovereignty of Nicaragua." Oren Lyons (Sub-Chief, Haudenosaunee) responded that "it is the Sandinista position that is a threat to Indians." And Russell Means (AIM) remarked, "the Sandinistas say that we are a threat to their sovereignty; we have to carve that one in granite."

Indian forces are prepared to fight and negotiate with the Sandinistas to defend their nations and promote their goals. The Sandinistas, however, have directed their military occupation forces against civilian Indian communities during the course of the negotiations. These regrettable events—probably carried out at the direction of Tomàs Borge, have severely jeopardized the talks, breaking them off in January, and now the Sandinista disregard for honor has led to their indefinite suspension.

As a precondition for beginning negotiations last year, Brooklyn Rivera returned to Indian Nicaragua with a Misurasata delegation under guaranteed safe conduct from Daniel Ortega. On the day of his departure—October 31—a large Sandinista attack was made on the Miskito village of Haulover, a center of Misurasata support. After the first negotiations in early December 1984, Rivera went inside Indian Nicaragua by outboard-powered canoe with an armed Misurasata unit to tell the people about the talks and to listen to their opinions. On January 1, the Sandinistas sent a military force against Indian communities in the Pearl Lagoon-Rio Grande area. Rivera was wounded by aircraft rocket shrapnel in the attack. He witnessed the attacks on Indian villages of Kara, Little Sandy Bay and Karawala. Other attacks were launched against Indian communities (Haulover, Wounta, and others) south of Puerto Cabezas. State military forces occupied many of the villages until February. Because of the attacks and occupation, Misurasata broke off the next round of talks scheduled for January 19-20, 1985. Only at the personal instigation of Colombian President Belisario Betancur did the talks resume in late March.

The Mexico City April 20-22 meeting produced a good faith accord between the Nicaraguan state and the Miskito, Sumo and Rama Nations. The Sandinistas promised to release Indian and Creole political prisoners, assist in supplying food and medicine to the villages, allow people the freedom to hunt, fish, and plant again. In turn, Sandinista and Misurasata forces would refrain from military actions. The Sandinistas wanted the accord to influence the April 23 vote on contra assistance in Washington; Misurasata wanted the accord to help the people who are being held as virtual prisoners in the villages. On April 28, 14 political prisoners were released by the Sandinistas; Misurasata suspects that more are held by the state.

In late April and May, Managua began to escalate security and military actions against the defensive forces of the Indian nations. State security agents infiltrated Nicaraguan Red Cross teams to gather counterinsurgency information under the pretext of distributing medicine. Military forces were moved from the Siuna-Bonanza area to the Indian communities of Alamikamba and Limbaika. The Frente Interno (combined Misurasata-Misura force) destroyed three troop transport trucks. The EPS occupation forces retaliated against Indian villages. On May 17, the Frente Interno attacked the Sandinista garrison in Bluefields.

The hit-and-run Bluefields attack sparked an uprising in the Creole militia (Milicias Populares Sandinistas—MPS). Sandinista occupation forces are generally detested by Indians and Creoles who if they are not in the armed resistance, must give tacit support to survive. The Nicaraguan state has exported its obligatory military service (Servicio Militar Patriotico—SMP) to the occupied Indian territories, and it is forcing Indians and Creoles into Nicaraguan units to fight against Indians and Creoles in the Frente Interno resistance. This is a common tactic of colonialist invaders who'd prefer to protect their occupation with the lives of the dominated. However, the reality in Indian Nicaragua is that civilians are Indians without guns, and many local militias are Misurasata forces being fed by the state.

Further talks have been suspended after the break down of the Bogotà III negotiations, May 25-26. During this last round of talks, the Sandinista delegation devoted its attention solely to denouncing Misurasata for supposed violations of a ceasefire that never existed, ignored proposals to set up a third-party commission to monitor agreements and violations, and avoided discussion of any of the fundamental issues such as land rights, resource rights, and autonomy.

A *New York Times* article (April 26, 1985:6) quoted Minister of Interior Tomàs Borge—who is now in charge of Sandinista Indian policy and administration—as making this chilling statement in Bluefields: "Here there are no whites, blacks, Miskitos or Creoles. Here there are revolutionary and counterrevolutionary Nicargauans, regardless of color of their skin. The only thing that differentiates us is the attitude we assume toward the nation."

Nicaragua is but another colonialist state seeking to justify its expansion into Indian homelands by accusing the Indian people of not adhering to the invader's ideology. Sandinista claims to a right to control Indian peoples and nations rests on the self-serving assumption that only the enemy resists takeover and subjugation. Six Nations Confederacy Chief Oren Lyons put it this way: "How can the Sandinistas justify being on Indian land? If they say they own it, they then declare themselves to be the aggressors. The only other way is to be there by invitation."

The Sandinistas cannot say they are on Indian land to assist Miskito, Sumo and Rama peoples because they have brought more suffering and repression in six years than has occurred during all the preceding 85 years of invading state regimes from Zelaya to Somoza. They cannot say they are on Indian land to defend the Indians from the FDN because it has been the Sandinista armed forces who have attacked the Indians: More than 100 villages destroyed; houses, canoes, crops burned; 50,000 people displaced to state camps and refugee camps; 1000 killed; 72 listed as "disappeared" after being taken by State Security forces. *[SEE: Appendix: Indian Trabilka and Indian-Sandinista Conflicts: inside cover maps]* They were not invited, they are not wanted, and they will eventually leave because no invaders have ever maintained their invasion.

The essential question is how long can the Sandinistas sustain their invasion of Indian lands? After almost 500 years, the Miskito, Sumo and Rama peoples have yet to be integrated by would-be invaders. To get the Sandinista state off their lands and out of their villages, the Indians were the first to take up arms, and are the first to try to negotiate. They will not forgive, they will not forget, they will not reconciliate with the Sandinistas, but they will continue to educate, fight and negotiate with them until the Sandinistas or whatever government that may be in Managua accepts the reality that the long-term political and military costs of an invasion are not sustainable.

The Sandinistas have made promises and have admitted errors for almost six years, but still they occupy Indian land, still they deny rights, still they exploit essential Indian resources, still they prohibit basic freedoms, still they imprison thousands in their state labor camps, and still they claim the right to maintain their invasion of Indian nations by repression. They can no longer pretend that the resulting Indian war is being fought by *somocistas,* right-wing contras, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), mercenaries or terrorists, because the Sandinistas have entered into direct negotiations with Indian resistance leaders—and no one else—to end the Indian war.

The Sandinistas are faced with a situation similar to what Amilcar Cabral (a former leader of Guinea-Bissau resistance against Portuguese occupation) called the "dilemma of cultural resistance": They can either try to liquidate almost all the population of the dominated nation to eliminate cultural resistance; or, they can try to impose themselves and the foreign systems without damage to the culture of the dominated people. The first hypothesis, Cabral notes, implies genocide of the indigenous population and thus destroys the object of the invasion. The second hypothesis has yet to be confirmed by history.

To avoid this choice, the invading state—regardless of political ideology, will try to create theories to convince the world that the invasion is in the best interests of the indigenous peoples (assimilation, integration, the Sandinistas' "New Indian"), that those being dominated are actually a minority that wants more than their fair share, that Indians are but an anachronistic impediment to progress, and that the State's suppression is not as bad as that done to indigenous peoples by neighboring or distance states.

The invading state must of course also try to convince the dominated peoples of the indigenous nations that it is really in their best interests to cease resistance; otherwise, military occupation must be relied upon as a long-term necessity. One way to control the culture of a dominated peoples is to change that culture. This is a common tactic used by invader states and settler states against Fourth World nations. It is what Rudolph Ryser calls "the great lie" which seeks to replace indigenous history, intellectual thought and rights, with European history, intellectual thought and rights: "The great lie is simply this: If indigenous peoples will only reject their own history, intellectual development, language, and culture and replace these things with European values and ideals, then indigenous people will survive." (Pathways to Self-Determination 1984:28) Surrender and submit and survive, or face annihilation to the point where even history books will only mention the indigenous resistance as being done by terrorists and mercenaries, today's equivalents of "marauding savages."

The Sandinistas are uncomfortable as colonialist invaders and they have yet to devise a "solution" to what they call the "Indian Problem." At the Bogotà II talks in March 1985, Sandinista *Comandante* Omar Cabezas exclaimed, clutching his throat, "We have had it up to here with you Indians." The Nicaraguan state thrashes about, using some of every occupation strategy: Military attacks, counterinsurgency against civilians, "hearts and minds," resettlement into government camps, negotiation promises, application of "the great lie" in invader schools and political meetings, try to manipulate indigenous peoples' goals, change occupation force leaders, shuffle occupation policy, and withhold basic necessities such as food and medicine until submission. All this and more and still it does not work.

The resistance of the Miskito, Sumo and Rama Nations is stronger today than it was just a few years ago. From late 1979 to early 1981, Misurasata focused Indian demands for rights and expanded internal support within the three indigenous nations; beginning in late 1981 they developed an armed defensive force; from mid-1982 they began to take control of the countryside and isolate the occupation forces into garrisoned cities and military camps; by 1983 they had forced the occupation armies into a costly and unsuccessful counterinsurgency campaign; by 1984 they had gained considerable international support for their struggle—and the occupation force had lost much; late 1984 they entered into negotiations with the government of the armed occupation; and in early 1985 they began to gain more support from Fourth World nations and resistance movements around the world.

At a meeting of Indian leaders at the Bogotà II talks in March, Gerald Wilkinson (National Indian Youth Council) said to the group: "Misurasata is in a very real way fighting for all of us. The point of a warrior is to give courage. It is now time to give support to these warriors."

[*El Nuevo Diario*, June 28, 1985]

Autonomy Document Ready

MISURA Leader Who Supported It Murdered

Tomas Announces that the DN [FSLN National Directorate] and the Government Will Examine It Thoroughly and Describes the CIA's Latest Moves to Disrupt Autonomy

Fagoth's Cruel Cynicism—He Uses Pantin in Exchange Offer After They Had Murdered Him

Eduardo Pantin, one of the leaders of the armed Indian group MISURA who had initiated peace talks with the Sandinista government, was murdered as part of a CIA plan aimed at delaying the pacification of the Atlantic region, Interior Minister *Comandante* Tomas Borge reported last night.

Borge also denounced that the objective of the recent unity agreement between the MISURA and Misurasata, who plan to hold an assembly in Honduras within the next 60 days, is to disrupt the autonomy process while at the same time allowing them to share in the $27 million that Reagan is going to give the contras.

Delivery of Autonomy Document

Last night *Comandante* Borge, who is the President of the National Commission on Autonomy, received at a special ceremony the document containing the principles and objectives of the important process that will make the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua an autonomous region. In closing the ceremony the Interior Minister stated that the government is prepared to continue a dialogue with the members of MISURA who follow Pantin's example.

Pantin was killed by Steadman Fagoth's people in the Yulu community last June 22, exactly one day before a meeting of Miskitos was to evaluate the results of the talks, and acts of sabotage and ambushing of civilians along the routes to the Coco River were to be halted.

Borge said that he has proof that there were conflicts between Pantin and Fagoth. The former wanted peace and the latter demanded war.

The witnesses to the death of Pantin, who was known as *Layan Pauni* (Red Lion), include Red Cross representatives in Puerto Cabezas, representatives of the International Red Cross, and Pantin's brother. They saw his body in Yulu, a community in northern Zelaya.

Comandante Antenor Rosales and *Sub-Comandante* Jose Gonzalez, the military leaders in northern Zelaya, had talked directly to Pantin and other MISURA leaders, agreeing upon a cease-fire, the return of the Miskito communities to the Coco River, and that group's support for the autonomy plan.

The cease-fire, which is still in effect, began on May 17 and allowed the government to supply food and medicine to the communities. The talks also resulted in the elimination of identification cards in northern Zelaya.

The CIA agent Steadman Fagoth, who is the leader of part of MISURA, said a few days ago in Honduras that he is holding Regine Schmemann, the German internationalist, and offered to exchange her for Pantin who, according to him, is being held prisoner by the Sandinista Army.

Tomas Borge said that Fagoth was shameless because, even though he knew Pantin was dead, he was offering to exchange him. "It is a deliberate blow against negotiation and pacification," Borge stated.

In-depth Examination

The National Directorate of the Sandinista Front and the government will immediately begin "a serious in-depth examination" of the autonomy document delivered yesterday by the expanded commission which studied the plan.

"With autonomy," Tomas said, "the ethnic groups of the Atlantic are going to exercise the rights they have always had but which were never recognized."

"The Indians will speak their own language, use their land, and maintain relations in accordance with their own customs. These are the same rights enjoyed by the inhabitants on the Pacific side," he explained.

He affirmed that the autonomous rights of the Atlantic region, which will be the law, will in no way impair the rights and duties of the nation.

Borge urged the inhabitants of the Pacific region to learn about the actual situation and the history of the Atlantic region and said that the inhabitants of the Atlantic region should do the same with respect to the Pacific area.

Letter From Vice Minister Carrion to Senator Kennedy on Pantin's Death

Managua, Nicaragua
July 22, 1985

Senator Edward Kennedy
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kennedy:

I received your letter of July 15, 1985, in which you request information about the death of MISURA leader Eduardo Pantin.

Because of military conflict which is prevalent in the zone it has not been possible to complete an exhaustive, official investigation. However, the investigations which we have been able to complete appear to corroborate the version that the death of Pantin was accidental.

Initially, we thought that he had been assassinated because we knew that was the expressed wish of Fagoth who wanted to terminate the talks which Pantin had initiated with the authorities in the Region, the talks which led to the immediate establishment of a ceasefire by the forces under his command.

Later we learned from his sublieutenant the version about the accident. In addition, a local Red Cross official who was in the place where the developments took place only a few days later was able to speak with nearby residents.

The present version is that he was lying in his hammock with a pistol on top of his body and that while he was suddenly getting up the pistol fell to the ground discharging and mortally wounding him. Our investigations have not uncovered anything that questions this version which we now consider to be well established ["fundamentally certain"].

We hope that this will be a satisfactory answer to the concerns which you brought to our attention.

Luis Carrion Cruz
Commander of the Revolution
First Vice Minister of the Interior

Annex 12

Permanent Commission on Human Rights 1984 Letter to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

The following document is a May 1984 letter from the Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. This letter summarizes the Sandinistas' flouting of human rights in terms of murders; disappearances; torture; prison conditions; arbitrary arrest; lack of due process; abuse of the Miskito Indians; repression of the Church, labor organizations, and political parties; politicization of the educational system; and censorship.

The CPDH does not report cases based on hearsay or newspaper reports, but requires sworn statements before it will investigate and report on cases. Many complaints are brought to it in which the victims and their families fear further persecution and therefore do not sign a formal affidavit. CPDH officials estimate that their reports cover only about 10 percent of the abuses in each category.

Testimony of the Nicaraguan Commission on Human Rights

Managua, May 12, 1984

Honorable Members of the
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sirs:

The Nicaraguan Permanent Commission on Human Rights would like to thank the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights for this hearing, which enables it to further its one goal, namely the defense of human rights of Nicaraguans.

We are deeply troubled by the state of human rights in Nicaragua, because we are witness to a growing and worsening disregard of these rights.

Before enumerating the violations of certain of these actual rights, we feel it is necessary to focus attention on the general state of affairs; the number and nature of complaints brought before our Commission in Nicaragua suggest that disregard and violations of human rights are widespread and diverse; lamentably they encroach on the right to one's life, one's liberty, physical well being, personal safety, freedom of speech, one's conscientous and religious freedom to educate children according to the beliefs of the parents, on private property, on freedom of trade unions, on the freedom of political parties. It is not simply a matter of actions that violate these rights but also of laws which violate them. We can actually say that the violation of the rights of Nicaraguans is being put into law.

But, gentlemen, this is not the most serious problem. The most serious concern is that behind all these cases of violation of human rights one can perceive an attitude or position of repudiation of rights a denial of the very existence of rights, so that what we would call rights is conceived of as something that is given by the State to individuals out of generosity or by permission and which can be revoked at any time.

We will now present a short description on the state of some actual rights, based on the complaints which we have received. CPDH does not claim to know of all the violations which have occurred in the country. Our description is based only on the cases that have been brought to us.

The Right to Life

In spite of the fact that legally the death penalty does not exist in Nicaragua, the Nicaraguan Permanent Commission on Human Rights has painfully witnessed an increase in the number of unexplained deaths. In the past 3 years alone the CPDH has received 97 complaints, all of which have been attributed to the civil and military authorities. These cases primarily concern people who were apprehended by officials who were fully identified. After a brief detention these prisoners were reported as "died during attempt to escape" or "died in combat with army troops" or "death caused by heart attack" and other strange explanations. All of the listed cases were brought before the competent authorities without any investigation to date and without any response to the CPDH or the families of the victims other than threats against their lives.

But the disregard for human life is further manifested in official positions and public speeches given by high officials of the Sandinista government. One example of this is the speech given by Commander Humberto Ortega Saavedra, Minister of Defense, on October 9, 1981, which warned: ". . . we are making every effort to avoid a resurgence of armed aggression, but if by some mischance it should occur and if in the course of it there is no change in attitude on the part of those who knowingly or unknowingly support imperialist plans from within Nicaragua . . . if they do not mature, if they do not join in the defense when aggression occurs, then they will be the first to be seen hanged by the sides of the roads and highways of the country . . . ."

The Disappeared

As far back as 1979 the Nicaraguan Permanent Commission on Human Rights presented about a hundred cases of prisoners who had disappeared to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Unfortunately, the Inter-American Commission ignored these complaints in its 1981 report. Nevertheless, new cases continue to be brought to our attention, offering us proof that this was no temporary problem but a permanent and continuing violation. Of the cases reported in 1979, 170 are still unresolved; in 1980, 355 were reported and 30 remain unsolved; from 1981 to 1983, 433 cases of disappearances were reported and to date 142 have not been located. To summarize, we have a total of 342 cases of disappeared prisoners.

This number was not invented by the Permanent Commission on Human Rights and at this time we will provide you with a detailed explanation of each case, describing the various circumstances in which they occurred.

We do not believe that these disappearances, be they permanent or temporary, are the result of administrative problems, but are a deliberate policy of keeping certain prisoners incommunicado and at the mercy of their captors, undergoing all sorts of physical and psychological abuse. For example: two officials of a Ministry were detained as of January 1983 in Managua by members of the State Security Headquarters. For one year the Permanent Commission on Human Rights and the families of the detainees made appeals to this agency, which denied knowledge of the detention and whereabouts of the prisoners. After one year these prisoners were released and they reported that throughout this time they had been held incommunicado and tortured and upon their release they were threatened with death if they divulged where they had been kept prisoner.

Torture

The Nicaraguan Permanent Commission on Human Rights has stated in the past that physical torture seemed to be disappearing in Nicaragua. This opinion was based on the small number of complaints about physical torture that we were receiving at the time. However, we are now obliged to correct this statement, in view of new evidence that has been brought to us; physical torture continues to take place in Nicaragua, even more than the psychological torture which we have always complained of.

There follows a list of frequently reported torture:

Violence and degrading treatment at the time of capture.

Intimidation and threats against the family when the person whom they wish to detain cannot be found, with the result that another member of the family is taken.

The shackling of prisoners' hands and feet when they are being transferred.

Forcing detainees to walk around the prison with their eyes closed or with blindfolds.

Indefinite isolation in completely closed cells without access to light or ventilation at time designed to force a person to remain standing or seated.

To force a detainee to lose all sense of time, by keeping him in constant darkness or light and by shortening or lengthening periods between meals.

Constant noise in a cell which prevents prisoners from sleeping.

Prohibiting prisoners from speaking either inside or outside the cell without previous authorization from the quard.

Forcing a prisoner to remain naked before a group of prisoners or soldiers, thus making him an object of scorn and ridicule.

Locking a prisoner nude in a cold cell.

Intense interrogations in the early hours of the morning, during which the prisoner is forced to incriminate himself or implicate other innocent persons, in which fake tape recordings of the voices and cries of his loved ones are used.

Keeping the prisoner without food, warning him that in order to get food he will have to give a confession.

Frequent beatings with belts or the butts of guns during interrogations.

Physical torture is most frequent in the interior of the country. The Permanent Commission on Human Rights knows of cases of prisoners with fractures to their upper and lower body from blows; of campesinos who have been required to walk long distances with their hands bound behind them and subjected to the lowest insults during the trip, to beatings and displays of mock firing squads.

Conditions in the Jails

The Inter-American Commission after having visited Nicaragua in 1980 was able to inspect some of the jails which are under the administration of the Penitentiary System and made a series of recommendations to the Nicaraguan Government in order to improve conditions in the prisons. Based on these recommendations we offer a description of the actual situation of prisoners in our country:

1. Our jails are outrageously overcrowded; especially those in which one finds convicted prisoners.
2. The packed prisoner cells have become infernos, due to the unbearable heat of the jail and the excessive number of prisoners in each cell.
3. The mattresses that the prisoners had in their cells had been provided by their families; as a result of this, as of October 1982 the authorities of the Model Prison of the Franca Zone removed all the mattresses and personal belongings of the prisoners.
4. Since 1979 the schedule of visits has been changed arbitrarily by the authorities of the Penitentiary System. In 1980 a rule was adopted that visits would be allowed once a month; in 1981 every fifteen days; in 1982

every 45 days; in 1983 every 4 months and 1984 every 2 months. After that the threat of suspension of visiting rights was used to keep the prisoner under control. The visits were limited to one person at a time for a maximum of 2 hours. There are no conjugal visits. The procedure required of family members making a visit obliges them to remain in the jail from dawn to midday. The visit itself begins when the sun is at its strongest. Both the long wait and the visit itself are under the sun.

5. The obstacles that prisoners encounter in regular trips to the bathroom result in buckets of excrement and urine inside the cells which cause contagious diseases throughout the prison.
6. Access to the outdoors is limited to a few hours a week and can be denied without justification as can visiting rights themselves.
7. Medicines and foods which families send to prisoners do not always arrive at their destination.
8. The availability of medical services in the prisons is highly deficient, as a result of which there are large numbers of sick prisoners without adequate medical attention.
9. Despite laws which require that a prisoner be sent to a hospital the military authorities violate this law. Prisoners with contagious diseases are in the midst of other prisoners.
10. No written materials of any kind are allowed inside the jail, neither can bishops, priests or pastors of any religious faith perform religious services inside the jail.
11. Prisoners are suddenly transferred from one jail to another, sometimes clandestine jails, without their families being informed.
12. Prisoners are threatened with the firing squad if there are any demonstrations.

Illegal Detention and Lack of Appeals

The right to freedom and personal safety does not exist in Nicaragua. At any time, arbitrarily and capriciously, the military or civil authorities can detain anyone, without giving any justifiable cause. Mere suspicion, rumor or complaint is enough to put a citizen in jail in our country. The person will not know the reason for his detention and he may remain in this situation for several months, even years without there existing any court that might protect him.

Arbitrary detention, without trial, without legal charges, without the possibility of defense, has been established as a system for intimidating citizens. After several months of illegal detention, they are freed without ever having been through any court and without being given any opportunity to defend oneself. Some of the prisoners have died in the jails. Others, after several years of prison, are declared innocent, but their families have been destroyed, their property has been confiscated, they have lost their jobs. There are also other prisoners who despite orders for their release remain in the jails. The Right of Habeas Corpus has been legally suspended since 1982.

Exceptional Tribunals

During its visit in 1980 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights was able to see for itself the existence of special judicial tribunals. According to the Inter-American Commission the existence of these tribunals gave rise to certain breaches which are not compatible with the assurances given by Nicaragua under the American Human Rights Convention. The Inter-American Commission recommended that the cases be reviewed" . . . by a judicial authority, either the Supreme Court of Justice, or the Appellate Courts".

But these recommendations remained precisely that—recommendations, because the government never carried them out.

In 1982, other special tribunals called People's Anti-Somocista Tribunals were created. They were brought into being to apply the Law for the Maintenance of Public Order and Security, a political law, with vague definitions of the crime, which enable it to be used to punish the government's adversaries. These special tribunals were created to function under the State of Emergency and to pass judgment on suspected counterrevolutionary activities. Although they are called "tribunals," there is only one of them located in Managua, with authority over the entire country and which is subdivided into two so as to give the impression that there exists a possibility of appeal.

The members of these tribunals with the exception of the two presiding officers of the court, are not lawyers, but members of the various mass organization of the Sandinista Front. They have been chosen by the Ministry of Justice, they are under its authority and the Ministry in turn is the prosecutor in the entire process. They operate entirely on the fringes of the Judiciary and there is no possibility for their sentences to be reviewed by the Courts or Independent Tribunals. The same procedural irregularities occur in these tribunals as did in the previous Special Tribunals. There are:

- Prisoners being detained and "investigated" remaining for a long time without being processed.
- Accusations are vague and imprecise.
- The time allowed for the preparation of defense and the presentation of evidence is short.
- Excessive discretionary judgment is left to the judge in the evaluation of the evidence.
- Arbitrariness in sentencing.
- The biasedness of the members of the tribunals and campaigns organized by the communications networks of the government against prisoners prior to judgment.

Condition of the Miskitos

Although it is true that the Nicaraguan Government freed over 100 Miskito prisoners as a result of the Amnesty Decree passed last December, it should, however, be emphasized that the right of the indigenous Miskito, Sumo and Rama populations continue to be violated. We believe it is necessary to emphasize this because silence might otherwise be interpreted as a sign that the problem of our indigenous population has been resolved or were in the process of being resolved.

1. It should be made known that there are still 435 Miskito prisoners in the jails, whom the government refuses to set free violating its own Amnesty Decree.
2. The Nicaraguan Permanent Commission on Human Rights has 69 cases of disappearances of Miskitos who were captured by identified authorities whose families are demanding an official explanation as to their whereabouts.
3. Entire communities on the Atlantic Coast continue to be uprooted and moved to new settlements which are militarily controlled by the government or by organizations belonging to the Sandinista Front.
4. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights visited the Miskito Zone in 1982 and 1983, but did not publish its report on these visits. It would be highly desirable if the Commission were to revisit the zone to make a new evaluation and to publish its findings.

Right of Religious Freedom

At first government attacks against Nicaraguans' freedom of religion and conscience were subtle, however, these attacks began to come out in the open in 1980 and were presented not as a persecution of the Church but rather as a rejection on the part of society of counterrevolutionary individuals who, in the words of the Minister for the Interior, Commander Tomas Borge "appear to be disciples of Satan, defending the reign of death . . . " We will present a few cases:

- In 1980, the government expelled the North American evangelical minister Morris Cerullo, moments after he had landed at the capital's airport.
- In 1981, dozens of Protestant and Moravian churches located on the Atlantic Coast were closed. Their ministers were arrested and expelled from the region.
  The government banned the televised mass, at which the Archibishop of Managua had officiated for many years.
  A Sandinista mob led by military officers stoned the Bishop of Juigalpa while on a pastoral visit to a region of his diocese.
  Another mob attacked the car of the Bishop of Managua destroying the vehicle's windows and tires.
- In 1982, two priests and three nuns were expelled from the country. The order was later revoked, but those involved were not allowed to return to their original dioceses.
  Temples belonging to Mormons, Moravians, Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses were taken by Sandinista mobs and later were confiscated by the authorities.
  Fifteen Jehovah's Witnesses were expelled from the country after the National State of Emergency was announced.
  The Minister of the Interior censored a letter sent by the Pope to the Nicaraguan bishops, for a while preventing its publication. Radio Católica was closed for one month for supposedly broadcasting "distorted" news.
  The government attempted to entrap the vicar of the Archiepiscopal Curia in an affair, which was highly publicized and aimed solely at humiliating and discrediting the priest.
  The Salesian College of Masaya was taken by force and two of its priests, including the directors, were expelled from the country.
- In 1983, the Ministry of the Interior banned for some time publication of any news in the papers relating to the Pope's visit to Nicaragua.
  The entire world was witness to the grave disrespect shown to His Holiness John Paul II and the sacrilege committed during the mass in Managua, against the religious sentiments of the majority of those present.
  In October of 1983, a number of parishes around Managua were taken over by Sandinista mobs.
  In November of 1983, the recently named director of the Salesian College of Masaya was again expelled.

In the past weeks, an ongoing campaign has been mounted in the official media to discredit and insult the bishops, whose sole "crime" was to publish a pastoral letter in which the bishops asked for people to join together, to forgive one another and to search for an understanding through dialogue.

Condition of the Trade Unions

Independent worker organizations such as the Central de Trabajadores de Nicaragua (CTN) and the Confederación de Unification Sindical (CUS) continue to be the object of repression in Nicaragua at every level. Thus far in 1984 there have been constant complaints of repression by the officials of these organizations. Grass roots activists are imprisoned for a few days to convince them that they should give up their union activities. They are harassed both in the cities and in the countryside. Their homes are threatened by mobs.

One of the main concerns of the Permanent Commission on Human Rights is the case of Carlos Acevedo Sirias, Director of the CTN, who was detained on February 10, 1984. During the fourteen days in which he was kept in the prisons of the State Security of Managua he was subjected to torture, both physical and psychological, to force him to declare that the national directors of his union were involved with armed counterrevolutionary groups and with members of the CIA. Before freeing him he was forced to sign a document in which he admitted that he had been well treated in prison.

Charges against union leaders brought before the so-called People's Anti-Somocista Tribunals have become commonplace since 1983; these are based on accusations of suspected counterrevolutionary activities and are not covered by the slightest judicial guarantees; recently four members of the Drivers' Union of the Urban Transport System of Managua (SIMOTUR) which is affiliated to CTN, were placed under the jurisdiction of these tribunals after being "under investigation" for six months. They were arrested after the trade union which they led had posted Wage Demands in front of the Ministry of Labor; although this case has already been brought to the attention of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, we renew our request that the Commission intercede with our government to obtain freedom for these Nicaraguan workers.

Condition of Political Parties

Above all, this is an especially delicate subject, because beneath the appearance of democracy lies hidden the reality of Totalitarianism. We say the appearance of Democracy because in 1983 the government approved a Law on Policital Parties, an Election Law and has announced the beginning of an Electoral Campaign which will climax in the General Election in November 1984. However, the law on political parties states that the goal of any party must be to contribute to what it calls "achievements of the Revolutionary Process." In fact, this means that the parties must fall in line with the ideas and positions of the Party of the Sandinista Front.

The Electoral Law does not specify the mechanisms that guarantee impartiality in counting the votes, nor the essential conditions so that individuals can vote without coercion.

There is talk of elections only after the peoples' right to self-determination has been snatched away, in such a way that opinions or actions which do not coincide with the party line are described as counterrevolutionary and as such are considered crimes.

There are numerous campaigns to discredit the national leaders of the democratic political parties, who are always described as "bourgeois," "reactionary" and "instruments of the CIA."

The right to hold public meetings has been suspended.

Middle echelon officials of the democratic parties and leaders of the youth groups of these same parties are assailed and struck in the open street.

Democratic political parties have no direct access to the media as a result of prior censorship, the suspension of independent news programs and television control by the Sandinista Front.

The arrest of middle echelon political leaders, attacks on their homes, public threats in official speeches and the open spying aimed at intimidating them, make the exercise of these political rights an exceptionally risky affair.

The Condition of Education

The Pact of San José established that parents have the right to educate their children according to their principles and values. However, this right is not recognized in Nicaragua. Mr. Sergio Ramírez, member of the Governing Junta, clearly states this in his speech: "There can never be parallel educational curricula in Nicaragua, whether or not they be religious, whether or not they are given by the Episcopal Conference. The right to teach is a sacred right of the Revolution, which cannot be renounced or delegated but must be exercised to its ultimate consequences."

What the Fundamental Statute recognizes is the right of parents to put their children in non-State schools. But private schools have no autonomy whatsoever. The only reason that they are private is because of the tuition fees.

Through elaborate rules dictated by the Ministry of Education and constant oversight, the values, principles and programs of the government party are imposed, completely obliterating the autonomy of private centers.

If parents have lost their right to educate their children in the private schools according to their principles and values, the situation is even worse in the state schools: the national educational system has been converted into the instrument of Marxist-Leninist indoctrination of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. Students and professors are obliged to follow certain guidelines and to act and behave as the party directs.

Freedom of Speech

Since March 15, 1982, when the National State of Emergency was announced, the right of freedom of speech and information was suspended for Nicaraguans. Since that time, 21 radio news programs have remained off the air. The previous censorship and closing down of radio stations went hand in hand with a series of violations against freedom of speech and information, including physical attacks on directors of the media, attacks on their homes, and destruction of radio transmitters by supposed pro-government fanatics who have never been punished for these criminal actions.

The newspaper, *La Prensa*, must present its news daily to the Ministry of the Interior, where all sorts of news items are censored, even though they may have nothing to do with the State of Emergency nor with national security. Obviously, no news relating to the violations of human rights is allowed to get through the censor.

On the occasion of religious celebrations for Holy week, the station *Radio Corporazion* requested from the Agency on Communications and the Media permission to transmit the events organized by the Catholic Church, but it was denied.

The journalist, Luis Manuel Mora Sánchez, president of the Workers' Union of the paper, *La Prensa*, was detained on April 28 for having transmitted to a station in Costa Rica—of which he is a correspondent—information about a protest made by about one hundred mothers of young men against military service. Mora Sánchez is still in the jails of the State Security in Managua and officials of this agency have indicated that he will be tried in the Popular Anti-Somoza Tribunals.

Finally, we would like to recall the tenth recommendation from the report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of June 1981 on the condition of Human Rights in Nicaragua, which states: "To guarantee those organizations engaged in the promotion and protection of human rights complete autonomy and the freedom to carry out their activities as well as the safety and complete freedom of their directors."

Despite these recommendations, employees of the Nicaraguan Permanent Commission on Human Rights have no guarantee that they can carry out their work, for example, we are not allowed to visit prisoners. Even worse we are systematically prevented from carrying out our humanitarian work, to the degree that there are instructions in the various offices of the Ministry of the Interior not even to accept our correspondence, including, ironically, the Complaint Department of this Ministry. Lower echelon employees of our organization are summoned to the offices of State Security, to pressure them into becoming informers.

Gentlemen, the state of human rights in Nicaragua is serious, very serious, and certainly extreme. It reflects a deep and widespread pain for the people of Nicaragua. As we explained in our letter to the president of the Contadora Group, the flight of thousands and thousands of families is only the internationally visible aspect of this great pain of the Nicaraguan people.

Because of this, the Nicaraguan Permanent Commission on Human Rights hereby requests that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights act urgently and, if possible, in some exceptional way with regard to Nicaragua. We request that you use those means which you deem most appropriate to speed up the procedures involving those cases that we have presented to you, especially those involving prisoners and we request that you send a permanent representative to Nicaragua for some time, so that your Commission may remain informed of the total picture and that you may act rapidly and expeditiously.

We realize that it would be an extraordinary measure, but we believe that the pain of the Nicaraguan people merits it. We willingly offer you our offices to facilitate the work of this delegate.

Annex 13

Political Killings

The Sandinistas claim publicly that they fully respect human life, and the "Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans" states that the right to life is inviolable. Nevertheless, there is conclusive evidence that the Sandinistas have engaged in the secret and systematic execution of opponents or suspected opponents of their regime.

The first document is a translation of a 1983 Permanent Commission on Human Rights report dealing with numerous cases of political killings committed by the Sandinistas.

The second document is an excerpt from the 1981 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights *Report on the Situation of Human Rights in the Republic of Nicaragua* providing the Commission's findings on the "La Polvora massacre."

Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua

Unexplained Deaths

A great number of deaths were reported to the CPDH after July 19, 1979. Most victims were accused of having collaborated with Somoza's regime. The accusations sometimes had no basis other than personal enmity.

Many executions occurred in the months of July and August, particularly in the Departments of Granada, Leon, Esteli, and Matagalpa, and in the municipality of Nueva Guinea. It is difficult to specify the number of victims, but it may be assumed that all the people who disappeared in those days were executed. The government has admitted that executions took place and has attributed them to unruly individuals, anxious for revenge. However, the government has not been able to provide concrete information as to the identities of the victims or of those responsible for their deaths, and there has been no administrative or legal investigation into the cases. The families have begged the government to tell them where their relatives are and to give them accurate information if their relatives are dead.

Unexplained deaths or serious acts of violence attributed to soldiers have continued to be reported to the CPDH. We have presented the problem to the highest authorities of the country several times, but, far from showing an interest in opening an investigation and publishing their reports, the government seems to be concealing the facts and protecting the people presumed responsible.

The CPDH has followed these cases carefully, has begun appropriate legal proceedings, and has filed complaints with the military organizations. Nevertheless, all the proceedings are in abeyance because of a lack of initiative on the part of the judicial authorities or threats against victims' relatives, or because the cases have been referred to the military Judge Advocate's office where the proceedings are kept confidential.

The National State of Emergency, through its censorship of the independent media, prevents the Nicaraguan community from knowing about certain types of unexplained deaths. Some of the most representative cases that have been reported to the CPDH are described below:

1. In the Modelo Prison at Tipitapa, known today as the "Jorge Navarro" Penal Center, seven prisoners died under unexplained circumstances:
   - —In August 1979, Marcos Davila Andrade, 28 years old.
   - —In November 1979, Guillermo Sanchez Pinel, 19 years old.
   - —In November 1979, Pedro Pablo Calderon Urbina, 18 years old, supposedly during an escape attempt.
   - —In November 1979, Humberto Villavicencio Montoya, 60 years old, from a heart attack. The CPDH had tried several times to get the government to transfer him to a hospital.
   - —In November 1979, a 15 year old peasant, Perfecto Perez Gonzalez.
   - —In December 1979, Jose Salome Cortez Prado, 56 years old.
   - —In February 1980, Guillermo Enrique Matus Gonzalez, 15 years old, after having been shot by his guard.
2. In the Polvora Prison in Granada, it was confirmed that most of the prisoners were executed on July 29, 1979. If these prisoners had been remanded to the Court, they would be free today. Some of the dead are:

Vicente Cuadra Chamorro
Alberto Varillas Chamorro
Bismarck Rodriguez Salazar
Julio Cesar Urbina Vargas
Gustavo Adolfo Marin Guzman
Julio Morales Carcache
Ivan Alfonso Molina Mercado
Jose Mercedes Alonso Pasos
Juan Alfredo Rodas Silva
Jorge Villalobos Toruno
Exequiel Zavala Jimenez
Jose Marenco Ramirez
Francisco Mayorga
Juan Rocha Rivas
William Jose Vargas Alaniz
Luis Martinez Marenco
Cesar Rivas Gullen
Hernaldo Lopez Cajina
Roger Gonzalez Ibarra
Cristobal Vargas Rocha
Julio Martin Rodriguez
Victor Murillo Hurtado

Note: At the end of this report there is a short description of this case.

3. In the Catarina Prison, jurisdiction of Masaya, ten prisoners, including a woman aged 47, were executed in the early morning of July 25, 1979. They are:

   Juan Romero Gaitan
   Juana Tardencilla de Romero
   Mario Jose Tapia Pizzi
   Antonio Ruiz Guerrero
   Pedro Joaquin Ruiz Guerrero
   Aaron Delgado Bermudez
   Gustavo Salguera Reyes
   Silvio Madonado Benavente
   Aurelio Blas Calero
   Emilio Duarte Lopez

4. In the month of November 1979, former Colonel Julio Cesar Fonseca Talavera died on the military base at Puerto Cabezas, after having been beaten and mistreated by his captors.

5. In November 1979, brothers Francisco and Angel Ruiz Mendoza were found murdered in the city of Esteli after their arrest had been confirmed at the local command post. There was no trial because of military obstacles and threats from military personnel.

6. In April 1980, Hilario Perez Hernandez was apprehended and murdered a few hours later by his fully identified captors.

7. Juan Antonio Centeno, Pedro Flores, and Brigido Gutierrez, farmers in Matagalpa, were murdered in March 1980, after having been apprehended by the head of the La Dalia command and other subordinates.

8. In March 1980, at the navy command in Corinto, Bayardo Molina Lainez was mistreated and shot. He died some hours later.

9. In September 1980, the bodies of the well-known boxer Alex Santana Guido and his friend Manuel Jiron Wilford were found in a street in Managua. The last news of their whereabouts had been that they were in Palo Alto Prison, accused of weapons trafficking and assault.

10. In August 1980, three prisoners who were supposedly to be transferred to Managua died in Leon during an escape attempt—according to the Ministry of Interior. The CPDH had filed several appeals on behalf of Antonio Espinales Sanchez when it learned that he was being mistreated, but they were not accepted because his rights had been "suspended."

11. Fifteen common prisoners were killed in the Heroes and Martyrs of Nueva Guinea Prison, known as Zona Franca, where 27 prisoners were wounded on June 27, 1981, as a consequence of a prison uprising. The names of the dead prisoners are:

    Julio Cesar Aguirre Palacios
    Tomas Amador Lopez
    Jose Mercedes Baltodano Reyes
    Ernesto Ramon Garcia Luna
    Carlos Ernesto Hernandez Castillo
    Carlos Roberto Keyler Benson
    Jose Horacio Martinez Poveda
    Daniel Jose Mena Gurdian
    Juan Jose Munguia Diaz
    Orlando Martin Pavon Vanegas
    Fabio Jose Valle Bustillo
    Denis Antonio Cajina Corrales
    Felipe de Jesus Canales Baltodano
    Mario Antonio Galeano Frixione
    Edwin Felipe Cordoba Diaz
    Jose Calixto Cruz Martinez

    Because of the seriousness of these events, a judicial investigation was demanded. However, the investigation was taken over by a military tribunal and the results were not made public. Several prisoners stated that some of the inmates whose names appear on the list of casualties resulting from the uprising were unhurt at the time that the MINT [Ministry of Interior] Special Troops took control of the situation in the prison.

12. In the months of April and May 1980, soldiers apprehended an indeterminate number of people in El Cua, Kilambe, Pita del Carmen, and El Tigre, who were accused of participating in counterrevolutionary activities. Of these, the following were later found dead: Efrain Molina, Cuto Torres, Justiniano Cano, and Salome Rodriguez.

13. Toward the end of November 1981, soldiers made mass arrests in La Paula, Valentin, San Jeronimo, El Toro, and Nuevo Sauce in the jurisdiction of southern Zelaya, and in the municipalities of Santo Tomas and La Gateada in the Department of Chontales. Those arrested were taken to the house of one of the prisoners in Correntada Larga, where the following people were later found dead: Gerardo Sequeira, Macario Amador, Elias Flores, Ignacio Raudez, Jose Calero, Heriberto Si Alfonso Aristides Miranda, Donis Oporta Castillo, and Juan Pablo Alvarado Perez.

14. Ruperto Masis Aguinaga, according to his family, was killed by soldiers in his home in Siuna on November 30, 1981, without any provocation. He was unarmed.

15. On April 10, 1982, Panfilo Arauz Narvaez, a peasant from Colonia San Jose in Nueva Guinea, was apprehended after attending a meeting in which those present were being ordered to join the militias. When Arauz Narvaez refused, he was arrested, tied up and taken to various command posts. Later, his mother was told that *he had died while trying to escape.*

16. In April 1982, 18 peasants from Olia Olia, Apanas, Batitlan, and San Pedro, in the Department of Zelaya, were apprehended and accused of participating in counterrevolutionary activities. They were taken to the San Pedro Prison, where they stayed for four days. Only 15 of them were then transferred to Managua, while the other three, Jacinto Lopez Mendez, Abundio Perez Lopez, and Claver Lezcano Perez, died in combat with army troops according to an official statement.

17. On June 4, 1982, Nicolas Nelson Perez Aviles, a 21-year-old taxi driver, was apprehended in Managua. He had been out of jail for 11 months after serving a two-year sentence handed down by the Special Tribunals. This prisoner was held incommunicado for three days. During this time his family did not know his whereabouts. Finally, they heard on a television newscast that he had been killed while attempting to escape.

18. Ignacio Gonzalez Haskin was killed by soldiers in front of his family on July 4, 1982, in his home in Wawa, jurisdiction of Puerto Cabezas in northern Zelaya. On the day of his death, his parents-in-law and his two brothers-in-law were apprehended, and a young daughter of his parents-in-law was raped.

19. Dionisio Angulo Lira was killed on July 25, 1982, around Huapi, jurisdiction of Rama, by soldiers under the leadership of Orion Duarte, when he was moving some animals owned by him to another farm. There are witnesses who state they saw the way in which Mr. Angulo died. However, the Complaints Department of the Ministry of Interior explained that he had died in battle and was a counterrrevolutionary.

20. On October 31, 1982, in Samulali in the jurisdiction of Matagalpa, Santos and Juan Figueroa Mendoza, brothers aged 55 and 33 respectively, were killed by four militiamen, Vicente Hernandez, Dionisio Zeledon, Ramon Lopez, and Pedro Mendoza, who, armed with machine guns, pushed them violently out of their house to kill them in front of their family.

21. Alfonso Castillo Ramirez, aged 20, Jonas Castillo, aged 19, Antonio Holles Gonzalez, aged 16, and Pedro Pablo Holles Gonzalez, aged 20, all farmers in the community of Quilali, Department of Ocotal, Nueva Segovia, were apprehended on November 16, 1982, at 4 p.m., when they were picking coffee on their respective farms located in the community of Las Delicias in the jurisdiction of Quilali, by militiamen Jose Zavala and Alonso Melgara, under the command of Polo Cano, the person in charge of the La Reforma state production unit.

    On November 29, 1982, *El Nuevo Diario* [a pro-Sandinista newspaper] reported that the Minister of Interior, Tomas Borge, had publicly announced their deaths, saying they were former National Guardsmen who died in combat. Their relatives say that this is untrue and that the victims were young and participated in UNAG, PROCAMPO, and the CDS [Sandinista organizations].

22. Juan Benito Herrera Jarquin, 16 years old, farmer in the Valle Las Delicias, jurisdiction of Quilali, Department of Ocotal, was apprehended on Tuesday, November 17, 1982, by members of State Security and taken to the Hacienda La Reforma, from where he was reported to have been transferred to Managua. In a communique from the Ministry of Interior published in *El Nuevo Diario, Comandante* Tomas Borge reported that he was a counterrevolutionary killed in combat on November 29, 1982.

23. Justo Pastor Gonzalez Quintero, 20 years old, farmer in the Valle Teosintale, Jurisdiction of Quilali, was apprehended by Polo Cano and Jose Cuadra on November 14, 1982, under the pretext that a statement was required from him. Some people in Quilali saw him being taken to the command post. The Ocotal command post sent for his mother, but she did not have the money to go. In the November 27, 1982, edition of *Barricada* [the FSLN's official newspaper] the Ministry of Interior reported that he had died in combat in the place known as Cerro Blanco located in Quilali and San Juan de Rio Coco. His family says that the communique's accusation that he had killed two members of the Ministry of Interior and was a counterrevolutionary is untrue. According to the family, he never belonged to the National Guard and participated in UNAG [a Sandinista organization].

24. Juan Eusebio Lopez Blanco was captured and taken away in a white car when he got off a bus in front of Carnisa in the city of Managua. On March 13, members of the police notified a sister of his that he had been found dead on the road to Matagalpa.

25 Daniel Eugenio Sierra Ocon was apprehended on November 26, 1982, by the Chief of Security Operations, Region V, for crimes involving national security. He had been promised that after giving a press conference he would be released. He was allowed to call home and to sleep there. On December 21, his wife was informed that her husband had committed suicide with a gun fitted with a silencer.

26. Justo Martinez Hernandez was apprehended on March 28, 1983, in the Hacienda "El Callao," accused of murder and cattle rustling, according to a Ministry of Interior communique of April 18, 1983. He died after trying to attack the patrol taking him from El Chipote to the penitentiary center of Tipitapa. The body had 30 bullet wounds in the abdomen and chest, and his forearms were broken. State Security did not allow funeral services to be held.

27. On September 3, 1983, Teofilo Maik Benles, a 79-year-old citizen of Miskito origin, died in the Lenin Fonseca Hospital in Managua. He had been apprehended on July 19, 1982, on the Atlantic Coast of our country, and had remained in jail until the day before he died, without ever being tried for the alleged crime for which he had been arrested. The Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua had made several appeals to have this prisoner released in view of his advanced age and the negligible danger he represented to the government. These appeals to the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction as well as the Ministry of Interior never received a response.

28. On October 9, 1983, five prisoners escaped from the Jorge Navarro Penal Readaptation Center known as the Modelo Prison. They were Rodolfo Baltazar Vallejos, Juan Joya Pichardo, Roberto Vivas, and Jorge Chamorro. On October 16, a person from Masaya appeared at their relatives' homes to inform them that Juan Joya Pichardo and Rodolfo Vallejos had been apprehended in San Blas, Department of Masaya. The families went there, and local people gave them details of the arrest. According to these accounts, Joya and Vallejos had been detected with the help of the CDS, and then soldiers arrived from Managua. The prisoners were taken in a white van toward the capital. The Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Interior later reported that on October 18 at 2300 hours, Juan Pablo Joya Pichardo and Jorge Chamorro were found near kilometer 18 of the old highway to Leon, and "when they were summoned by the authorities, the fugitives responded by firing their guns, so the patrol had to respond to this attack, and the aggressors died in the exchange." The official version differs widely from the reports received by the relatives.

29. Alfredo Tercero, aged 28, and Fausto Tercero, aged 26, both union members affiliated with the Nicaraguan Workers Central, residents of Castilla, jurisdiction of Rancho Grande, Department of Matagalpa, were apprehended and accused of collaborating with the counterrevolution. From Rancho Grande they were taken to Waslala and later to El Chile. Some days later their relatives were informed that they had been killed during the transfer and were told where to find the bodies.

30. Jose Esteban Lazo Morales, aged 39, cattleman, residing in San Pedro de Lovago, Department of Chontales, was apprehended in his home on November 13, 1983, by four members of State Security who called him a "Somoza beast" and ordered him to say good-bye to his relatives because he would not be seeing them again. On November 17, State Security told his wife that Mr. Lazo Morales had died of a heart attack and that his body was in the morgue at the hospital in Juigalpa. The next morning, the body was turned over to her in a sealed coffin. She was warned not to open the coffin and ordered to bury it that morning. The body had a broken nose, blows around the eyes, blood on the head and ears, two surface wounds about four inches long, and fractured ribs. The medical examiner's report stated that Mr. Lazo Morales died of a heart attack and that the blows and wounds on the body were the result of falls which occurred before death. However, the relatives state that he had never had cardiac problems.

31. Ramon Heberto Torrentes Molina, resident of Chinandega, was apprehended by members of the Sandinista Police and State Security on December 8, 1982. On December 9, his body was taken to the morgue of the hospital in Chinandega, showing obvious signs of torture. His right hand was completely smashed and there were three 45-caliber bullet holes in the body. When those responsible for his murder

were tried, no witness was allowed to make statements, and the accused were acquitted by the military Judge Advocate's office on July 21, 1983. The arguments used during the trial that led to the acquittal of those responsible contradicted the evidence presented by the medical examiner.

32. Armando Adolfo Hernandez Castro, 32 years old, resident of San Rafael del Norte, was driving in his van on December 28, 1983, on the road out of San Rafael del Norte in the Department of Jinotega, when he was machine-gunned. The shots came from one of the Pablo Ubeda Troops patrols from the Ministry of Interior, who attacked without provocation and killed Mr. Hernandez Castro. To this date, the military authorities have shown absolutely no interest in this case. However, soldiers quartered in that town's command forced Mr. Oscar Zeledon, the only eyewitness, to sign a version of the event which contradicts what actually happened.

Conclusions

The cases described were presented to the CPDH by the relatives of the deceased. They were filed with the competent authorities through established procedures. To date, however, the majority of the cases remain shrouded in mystery, and the responses by some government officials are contradictory or implausible. We have encountered countless obstacles in our efforts to request legal investigations, such as refusal or negligence on the part of military or judicial officials to expedite the proceedings, threats against the families of victims, transfer of judicial proceedings to the military sphere, and the new law which prevents an individual from filing criminal charges and makes the Ministry of Justice the only institution able to initiate penal action.

The CPDH does not seek to blame the government for these deaths but requests that these events be investigated and the results published. Otherwise, silence on the part of the government should be interpreted as a cover-up.

The CPDH emphasizes the need for the government to publish its investigations and punish those responsible for these events, because only in this way will it create the conditions to prevent additional deaths from taking place under similar circumstances.

Finally, we call upon the authorities of the National Penitentiary System to take the necessary precautionary measures during transfers of prisoners, since the number of deaths during escape attempts has increased considerably.

Managua, September 17, 1983.

Note: These events were reported to the Judge of the Criminal District of Granada on October 9, 1979, whose investigation was suspended from November 5, 1979, to August 6, 1981 (one year and nine months later). The trial was resumed at the express request of the Supreme Court. Then it was suspended once again and resumed on March 29, 1982 (seven months later) at the request of the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Finally the judge pronounced a judgment on May 7, 1983 (three years and five months after the deaths) concluding that: " . . . there is not the slightest indication that Francisco Mayorga Ramirez, Julio Cesar Urbina Vargas, Luis Amado, and Hernaldo Lopez Cajina were under arrest in the place known as 'La Polvora' at the time the complainants allege that their relatives were in prison, because there is not one witness to support this information . . . " and that "the identities or descriptions of those two 'compas' [comrades] who conducted the arrest cannot be exactly and precisely determined, nor can the military unit to which they belonged, the place in which they were quartered, whether they were really 'compas' or not, and also whether they were militiamen or simply 'armed men.' In short, it is impossible to ascertain who conducted the 'arrest' of Dr. Mayorga and where he was taken: the identities of the people who carried out this act simply cannot be established . . . . (b) Marvin Molina Gonzalez, who, according to the accusers, is responsible for the fate of their relatives, said that he 'practically had no knowledge about the prisoners after the triumph of our vanguard since, in the first place, there was such a large number of prisoners that it was practically impossible to keep track of them and know each one's identity, and, anyway, the most important task at the time was the immediate reorganization of our country. . . .' Thus, on the basis of the data and facts available to formulate an opinion, the undersigned judge cannot determine the degree of responsibility or, in other words, hold Marvin Gonzalez Ruiz or 'Wilmer' legally liable . . . since there are no indications or evidence of his responsibility, either as perpetrator, accomplice, or accessory. There is therefore no alternative but to declare the case closed and pronounce the legally appropriate judgment, a complete dismissal of the charges against Gonzalez Ruiz."

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

Report On

The Case of the Prisoners at the "La Pólvora" Prison, Granada

1. Before and during its visit to Nicaragua, the Commission received denunciations on the alleged illegal execution of individuals who had been detained at the prison known as "La Pólvora," a garrison in the city of Granada, Nicaragua, during the final days of July 1979. The information received alleged that an indeterminate number of prisoners were taken from the jail, executed and buried in common ditches. These sites were inspected by relatives of the prisoners, representatives of the Permanent Commission on Human Rights and judicial authorities of the city of Granada.

2. As an example, some of the communications received by the Commission are as follows:

Case 4566: Dr. César Rivas Guillén[6]

The Commission received the following denunciation concerning the disappearance of the gynecologist Dr. César Rivas, of Granada. This was the first of a number of communications that concerned the events at "La Pólvora," and was received in October 1979.

> That on July 22, 1979, CESAR RIVAS GUILLEN, a married adult, and a physician, domiciled in Granada, was apprehended in that city by a group of militiamen in service at the "La Pólvora" Command Post in Granada.
>
> The argument against him was that he belonged to the organization known as "Mano Blanca." He remained approximately seven days in the Granada jails, where he was visited and sent food. However, on the 29th of July, we realized that he was going to remain there, because he sent us a paper. Since that day we know nothing further of his whereabouts, although a "Compa" said that he had been taken to Managua in the middle of the night. We had reports to the effect that early that morning there were a number of executions of guardsmen in those jails. Subsequent to these events, those in charge of the Granada Command Post were changed and they are now prisoners and are under investigation.
>
> However, because of these events I fear for his physical safety, as I do not know where he is. Because of this uncertainty, I have brought his case to the attention of commanders Hugo Torres and Walter Ferreti. They have full knowledge of the case but have not yet replied, even though they learned of the matter a month ago. I have also brought this case to the attention of the Ambassador of Spain, since Dr. Rivas' wife is Spanish.
>
> I must add that I have good reason to believe that his arrest was the result of malicious information by unscrupulous individuals who, out of personal rancor and envy, have always tried to injure him. This is evident inasmuch as those who were his colleagues before his arrest have now taken over his medical equipment, and personally urged him (when he was in La Pólvora) to admit to being a member of the "Mano Blanca," which was false, since he was not found guilty of anything, but no one will tell me where he is.
>
> Because of the gravity of the facts set forth, and because of the statements made by the Commanders of the Revolution to the effect that they will report truthfully as to the whereabouts of the prisoners who have disappeared, I request that you take whatever measures, you deem appropriate, to determine whether or not he is alive, since at the present time, his mother, who is an old woman, is suffering from cancer, and her condition has deteriorated as a result of this situation.

Almost simultaneously with the original denunciation, the Commission received a number of telegrams indicating that the life of Dr. Rivas was in danger and requesting the Commission's urgent intervention; upon receiving these denunciations, the Commission immediately requested information from the Government.

On November 30, 1979, the Commission was informed by the Government of Nicaragua that the appropriate authorities had been instructed to provide information on the case, which would be transmitted to the Commission as soon as possible.

On May 5, 1980, the Commission received the following reply from the Government of Nicaragua with respect to the whereabouts of Dr. Rivas:

> As to Dr. César Rivas Guillén, unconfirmed reports indicate that he died in the last days of the war to liberate our country, or in the days subsequent to the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution; it has not been possible to establish the circumstances of his death.

3. The second complaint the Commission received in connection with the events at La Pólvora

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[6] The paragraphs quoted in this case are the pertinent parts of the communication presented.

concerned the case of Dr. Francisco Mayorga Ramírez, an attorney.

In a communication dated October 17, 1979, the following facts were presented to the Commission.

> *Case 7057: Dr. Francisco Mayorga Ramírez*
>
> Francisco Mayorga Ramírez, 42 years of age, an attorney domiciled in Granada, was notified on Sunday, July 22, 1979, that he was to appear at the Military Police Headquarters of Granada; at 1:00 p.m., he presented himself at the Military Police Station of Granada where he was arrested. Later, he was taken to the Command Post known as "La Pólvora" where he was held until July 26; he was then released with the respective safe-conduct.
>
> When Francisco returned to his home after having been detained, he reported that the charges leveled against him were that he had been a civil and criminal judge approximately ten years ago.
>
> On July 28, 1979, Francisco was at a home in the vicinity of the Criminal Court of the District of Granada, approximately thirty yards from the lake, on Real Street in Granada, at a meeting of lawyers which was planning a visit to the General Staff of Granada and to the local Government Junta to ask them to determine the field of action in which attorneys could now exercise their profession.
>
> During that meeting, two members of the Sandinista People's Army appeared. They arrested Francisco again, without respecting the safe-conduct which he carried with him. They took him to La Pólvora prison again.
>
> The next day, Sunday July 29, when a member of the family appeared at La Pólvora Command Post to bring Francisco his breakfast, the person who passed on the food that day informed the relative that Francisco had been taken to Managua.
>
> Sensing something fatal, I met some friends who told me not to worry, that they would go to "La Pólvora" to inquire as to Francisco's whereabouts. At the Command Post, they were seen by the military officer in charge, Comrade Marvin González Ruiz, known as "Wilmer," who told them that Francisco "had been taken to the International Red Cross and that if they wanted to see him they should hurry, since he would be taken to Guatemala that same Sunday."
>
> With that news, I went immediately to Managua where I realized that I had been the victim of a joke, since the International Red Cross was closed and a member of that institution told me that no prisoner had been brought there for that purpose.
>
> That same day, July 29, at about 5:00 p.m., certain individuals unknown to me, farm workers by appearance, came to the house and said that they knew Francisco and had seen his corpse in grazing land on the Santa Ana Hacienda, on the Los Malacos road. These individuals also said that there were approximately fifty (50) more bodies, whose hands were tied behind them.
>
> Various individuals and institutions have been approached in an effort to exhume the corpse of Francisco and give him a Christian burial, but thus far this has been impossible.
>
> These are the reasons why the death of Dr. Francisco Mayorga Ramírez is being denounced. As yet no one knows why his life was taken, since no authority has assumed responsibility for his death. While it is true that he was a member of the Liberal Party, a family tradition, he never hurt anyone; to the contrary, he was held in high esteem by all those who knew him. Moreover, the death penalty is not known to exist in Nicaragua.
>
> The exhumation of the corpse of Francisco is requested so that in keeping with our religious principles he may be given a Christian burial.

On April 24, 1980, the pertinent parts of this communication were transmitted to the Government of Nicaragua, which was asked to provide information on the case.

Later, the Commission received the following information from the Permanent Commission on Human Rights:[7]

> On Tuesday October 3, 1979, at the request of Doña Marlene Taleno de Mayorga, we conducted the first inspection of the site known as La Montañita de Santa Ana. This is a mountainous terrain some three blocks in area, located on the Los Malacos road, some four kilometers northeast of the city of Granada.
>
> Thirty meters beyond the barbed-wire fence, we observed tracks of a heavy vehicle. These were tracks left by a steam shovel that was there to dig a ditch of regular proportions.
>
> A little further on, we found a depression some 6 meters in length and 3 meters in width. At ground level were a skull, bones and shoes. The ground was loose over the entire surrounding area.

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[7] CPDH: "The La Pólvora Prisoners. What Happened to Them?," June 6, 1980.

> At Doña Marlene's insistence, who stated that the corpse of her husband, Dr. Francisco Mayorga Ramírez, had been seen at the top of a pile of bodies, we removed a small amount of earth.
>
> Only 2 or 3 cm. had to be dug: worms and decomposing human remains appeared. Doña Marlene recognized the pants of her husband and began to sob inconsolably.
>
> We then recovered the human remains and returned to the city of Granada, where we spoke with relatives of other victims who had gone to the site of the massacre, alerted by farmers from the area, and who had even seen where part of the pile of bodies had been consumed by flames, as they had been drenched in diesel fuel. Witnesses confirmed that some of the bodies had their hands tied behind their backs.

Mrs. Mayorga tried to obtain the exhumation of her husband's body to give him a Christian burial. In an effort to obtain a legal disposition of the case, she brought the matter to the attention of Judge Agustín Cruz:

> On October 9, Doña Marlene Taleno de Mayorga appeared before Dr. Agustín Cruz Pérez, Judge of the Criminal District of Granada, to present a brief denouncing the death of her husband, Dr. Francisco Mayorga Ramírez, and to request the exhumation of his body.
>
> On Saturday, October 13, Judge Cruz Pérez, in the company of his Secretary, conducted the eyewitness inspection requested, and drew up the corresponding report. In addition to noting what the people from the CPDH had seen on their first inspection, the judge inspected the entire site and succeeded in identifying at least two other places where there were human bones scattered at ground level, along with shoes and pieces of clothing. He also found a number of deep holes that seemed to indicate that the relatives of the victims had been coming to exhume the bodies of their loved ones under the protection of darkness.
>
> In a new brief presented to the same Judge of the Criminal District of Granada, Dr. Agustín Cruz Pérez, Mrs. Marlene Mayorga persisted in her request to exhume the remains of her husband, and also claimed that some of the individuals apparently responsible for the acts denounced, were attempting to flee the country to escape justice.

The Court handed down the following ruling with respect to the request of Mrs. Mayorga:

> Court of the Criminal District.
> Granada, the second day of November of nineteen hundred seventy-nine.
> At 10:05 in the morning.
>
> THE EXHUMATION REQUESTED BY MRS. MARLENE TALENO DE MAYORGA IS DENIED IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED IN ARTICLE 68 HAVE NOT BEEN SATISFIED—LET NOTIFICATION BE MADE.

4. In a communication dated October 17, 1979, a 29-year-old chauffeur with the rank of sergeant in the defunct National Guard denounced the execution of Roger Alfonso González Ibarra. The claimant narrated the events as follows:

> *Case 7056: Roger Alfonso González Ibarra*
>
> Roger Alfonso González Ibarra, an adult, and a former member of the military, was seized in Malacatoya, jurisdiction of Granada, on July 19, 1979, and was held four days more in the women's prison in that city.
>
> On July 23, he was taken to La Pólvora, the officer-in-charge being Commander "Wilmer," whose name is Marvin González. He allowed me to speak with Roger on July 26, at 6:00 p.m. Roger said that if he was not there the next day, not to continue to look for him.
>
> I was astonished to learn that he had been taken from the La Pólvora jail at midnight, July 27, along with 50 other individuals, all of whom were executed without any order whatever, without any prior investigation, and without respect for human life. A copy of the death certificate is attached, and you may be assured that the General Staff of the city of Granada is aware of these facts.
>
> It is requested that an order for exhumation be granted, so as to give him a Christian burial; his body is near the Los Malacos road, outside Granada, and I can show them the exact spot where the body is to be found.

Subsequently, the claimant submitted the following additional information:

> . . . on July 26, I managed to speak with him in the prison, where I went after having read a message he had sent to me that morning. It was as follows: "that he urged me to speak with the Judge of the Criminal District of Granada, Agustín Cruz Pérez, because the previous night they had bound and taken away 20 individuals; they had told him that they were

> going to send him to Panama, and in parentheses he added, . . . or is it a trick to kill me?" He urged me to speak with that official and to plead for his life. When I went there that afternoon together with the Criminal Judge for that district, they let only me and [. . .] enter. We spoke with him and he told us that if he was not there the next day, not to go on looking for him. The next day, I went to the prison to bring him his breakfast and his clothes. The clothing was returned to me and the guerrillas, Commander "Wilmer" among them, said that they had taken him to Managua, but did not mention where in Managua he had been taken.
>
> . . . I turn, therefore, to this Commission in an effort to establish his whereabouts. . . .
>
> Further, in a report that appeared in "*La Prensa*," on September 13, 1979, it came out that Commander "Wilmer" is now being held in "La Pólvora" in Granada; however, there was no information as to the grounds for his arrest.

On April 24, 1980, the pertinent parts of this communication were submitted to the Government of Nicaragua for comment.

In a document received later by the Commission, the Granada Civil Records showed the cause of death to be as follows:

> . . . at three in the morning on July 29, 1979, ROGER ALFONSO GONZALEZ IBARRA, a married adult, and a resident of Granada, died from a bullet wound, without medical attention, at the age of 29. . . .

The Government of Nicaragua has not responded to the request from the IACHR on this case.

5. A communication of October 17, 1979, denounced the execution of Exequiel Zavala Jiménez, as follows:

> *Case 7064: Exequiel Zavala Jiménez*
>
> On July 22, 1979, Exequiel Zavala Jiménez, of Granada, a married businessman, was apprehended for the third time, by a group of militiamen accompanied by Comrade "Marcelo." Exequiel Zavala Jiménez was taken away to "La Pólvora." When I demanded that these individuals show me some identification, they told me that they were Sandinista Military Police, whose commanding officer was Commander "Marcos."
>
> I must point out that he had been taken on two previous occasions, allegedly because he was a friend of the guardsman known as "Gato Colindres"; and that he had been released after having been found innocent of the charges presented against him.
>
> But when last seized, he remained five days in La Pólvora prison, where he was questioned by Commander "Wilmer." On Thursday, July 26, he told us that he was about to be released but that he had not yet been released because there was no one to prepare the memorandum.
>
> The next day I went to see the Commander and was told that Exequiel was no longer there, that he had been taken to the Bunker in Managua. Since that date, he has been the object of an unrelenting search of all the jails. A complaint was filed with the Office of Complaints of the Ministry of the Interior, to obtain their assistance in locating Exequiel.
>
> However, on Thursday, October 11, 1979, Comrade Gloria Bolaños, the official in charge of the Complaints Department of the Ministry of the Interior, told me that she had heard that they had executed Exequiel. She said that because they had executed a number of prisoners, the Granada Commanders had been arrested and had been dismissed from the army. She also said that among all those executed, there were at most two or three who were innocent victims. She said she could not lie to members of the family because she did not want to see us wear ourselves out. She told me that a number of arbitrary acts had been committed in Granada at that time and that she could do nothing.
>
> It is because of the foregoing that I turn to you to denounce formally the disappearance and presumed execution of Exequiel Zavala Jiménez so that you may make the case public and investigate those responsible for the presumed murder.

On April 24, 1980, the pertinent parts of this denunciation were sent to the Government of Nicaragua for its observations.

On May 28, 1980, the Commission received a reply from the Government of Nicaragua acknowledging receipt of this case as well as Case 7056, mentioned earlier. The Government told the Commission that the jurisdictional authorities for the case had been asked to provide the information. To date, no information has been received.

6. Before conducting its on-site observation in Nicaragua, the Commission also received the following cases concerning the executions at La Pólvora. These cases too have been presented to the Government of Nicaragua, and again, no reply has been received.

Case 7063: Gabino Velásquez Meza

On July 23, 1979, Gabino Velásquez Meza, a single adult and former private in the defunct National Guard, turned himself in to La Pólvora Command Post in the city of Granada, since he had been told that "los muchachos" (the FSLN) were searching for him; it was his understanding that his physical safety would be guaranteed by turning himself in to the new authorities and thus he decided to appear, accompanied by his wife and small children.

In the days that followed we were able to send him food. He sent us papers, which proved to us that he was there. However, by the third day of his stay in La Pólvora, a militiaman stationed at that Command Post told us that he had been taken to the Modelo prison, information that a commander by the name of Lang, who was one of those in charge of that prison facility, confirmed for us.

Since that date, we have conducted an intense and relentless search for Gabino, not only at the Modelo prison but also in other penitentiaries; thus far we have found nothing.

It is because of the above that I turn to you for aid in taking steps to establish his whereabouts and to determine whether or not he is alive, since there are rumors that executions were carried out at that Command Post.

Case 7237: Jorge Villalobos Toruño

Jorge Villalobos Toruño, 45 years of age, married, and a chauffeur, was apprehended on July 26, 1979, in the city of Granada, and taken to the La Pólvora jail, from whence he disappeared on July 29. Commander "Wilmer," according to relatives of the prisoner, told them that there had apparently been an order for his execution. However, later other individuals stated that they had seen him in the Modelo prison and that he was being held incommunicado.

Case 7315: Gustavo Adolfo Marín Guzmán

On July 24, 1979, Private Gustavo Adolfo Marín Guzmán, an adult domiciled in Granada, turned himself in to the authorities of the FSLN. He was confined in the cells of La Pólvora. The officer in charge was Commander Marvin González Ruiz, known by the pseudonym "Wilmer," who later gave the order for execution. Neighbors in the vicinity of the Santa Ana hacienda, on the Los Malacos road, Department of Granada, said that they saw the body of this individual together with the remains of Dr. Francisco Mayorga.

Case 7318: Luis Martínez Mercado

On July 25, 1979, Mr. Luis Martínez Mercado, an adult domiciled in Granada, and former National Guard aide, was confined in the cells of La Pólvora. He was then taken away, destination unknown, on orders from Commander Marvin González Ruiz, known by the pseudonym "Wilmer." The reports are that there were massive executions that day. Nothing of his whereabouts is known and he is presumed to be dead.

Case 7308: Cristóbal Vargas Rocha

Cristóbal Vargas Rocha, 24 years of age, single, a custodian and resident of Granada, was apprehended on Sunday, July 24, 1979. The reason for his capture is not known. Through a militiaman stationed at La Pólvora (a Granada prison), it was learned that on July 26, 1979, at 11:00 p.m., some 50 prisoners were taken away and brought to an area near the shore of Lake Granada, where they dug their own graves.

The officer in charge of the command post was the so-called "Wilmer," whose name is Marvin González Ruiz. He is the direct author of these mass executions.

With respect to the case of Cristóbal Vargas Rocha, the Commission received the following information:

> However, in my desperation I have investigated and asked questions; one day, a militiaman who was stationed at La Pólvora and whose name I cannot reveal because it would place him in danger, told me not to continue my search for Cristóbal, that all was in vain; he said that on Thursday, July 26, at around 11:00 at night, they took a truckload of prisoners from La Pólvora, approximately 50 in number; they took them to El Diamante, a rice field close to the shore of Lake Granada. There they set them about digging giant ditches, which took them about two hours. Then, at 1:00 in the morning, they shot them and buried them at that place, which is also known as Asese. This young man told me that he could identify Cristóbal among those who were executed.

7. On March 17, 1980, the relatives went to the place specified, which is on the way to the "El Diamante" rice plantation, in the Asese zone, approximately 500 meters beyond the San Roberto Hacienda. Aided by local farmers, who provided shovels and even by certain members of the Sandinista Army who had been informed of the purpose of the visit, the relatives discovered various human remains: two

skulls, a number of ribs, pelvic bones that still had pieces of cloth stuck to them, such as a pair of red pants and a red and blue striped shirt.

8. The next day, March 18, the relatives, on the advice of an attorney, submitted a denunciation of what they had discovered to the Criminal Judge of the District of Granada, Dr. Agustín Cruz Pérez, and requested an investigation of another site where other bodies were alleged to be.

The relatives also sent a letter to the Attorney General, Dr. Ernesto Castillo Martínez, requesting a careful investigation into the events and the individuals responsible. A copy of this letter was submitted to the Commission during its on-site observation. It reads as follows:

> We are relatives of the prisoners who disappeared from the La Pólvora prison in Granada in the last days of July 1979. The individual in charge of the Command Post at that time was Mr. Marvin González, whose pseudonym is "Wilmer." Through a number of inquiries with various state agencies, we have learned of executions of prisoners being held at La Pólvora, executions that took place at the time in question. According to a number of witnesses, those executions were carried out at three or four different sites outside of Granada. The military at La Pólvora referred to those sites as Panama, Mexico, Guatemala and the Red Cross, as they had told the prisoners that they were going to be transferred to those countries or to the Red Cross in Managua. Two of those fatal sites have already been located. One is at the place known as "La Montañita," on the Santa Ana Hacienda, on the Los Malacos road northeast of the city of Granada; the other is at the site known as "La Arocera" on the road to "El Diamante" Hacienda, in the vicinity of the Port of Asese south of Granada. However, despite our many efforts and efforts made at our request by attorneys and officials of the Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua (CPDH), the facts have not been thoroughly investigated and the few official reports are partial and contradictory. This has caused us, our children and relatives, anxiety and constant pain. We are trapped in uncertainty, and face the possibility that our relatives are still alive in some prison, without any physical, moral and legal assistance. Our personal lives and the lives of our families are seriously affected; we go back and forth, between hope and pain constantly. A considerable number of us have suffered serious breakdowns or have even died as a result of such prolonged suffering. In view of the fact that the number of prisoners who disappeared from La Pólvora prison is high, and may be as many as several hundred, and taking into consideration the unclear circumstances surrounding the case, we hereby submit a formal denunciation of these events to you, inasmuch as the law has delegated to the Ministry in your charge the responsibility for locating the prisoners who disappeared, and establishing any guilt there may be. Thus, we demand a thorough and complete investigation into the military authorities who were part of the General Staff of the city of Granada at that time, those persons responsible for the custody of the prisoners, who drove the vehicle which took the prisoners to the aforementioned places and other individuals who participated and who can testify to the events that took place. We ask that you inform us when the specific inquiries will be made, so that we ourselves can cooperate with you by contributing documents or new information on these cases. We expressly request that this denunciation as well as the measures which you or your delegates conduct be well publicized so that other families in similar circumstances who, out of ignorance or fear, have not dared to present their cases, may present them to you as soon as possible. It is our belief that in the new Nicaragua, effective respect for human rights must be guaranteed, especially the right to life and to personal freedom, without discrimination, as provided by law and set forth in the international conventions signed by Nicaragua and solemnly ratified by the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction. In the hope that justice will be done and in the name of the blood of our countrymen that has already been shed, we demand that a diligent investigation be conducted and that those found to be responsible for criminal acts be punished with exemplary rigor since once the crimes committed against the prisoners at La Pólvora have been established, they will assuredly constitute a clear case of genocide, described in our Penal Code as a crime against the international order. We have requested the assistance and guidance of the Permanent Commission of Human Rights of Nicaragua (CPDH) which, as a humanitarian and impartial body, has taken up our cases out of fraternal interest and has studied them objectively and calmly. It is precisely as a result of a suggestion made by this humanitarian organization that we turn to you today in one more effort to clarify the facts, to establish the whereabouts of our relatives who are still alive

and to achieve the immediate release of those found to be free of any responsibility for the crimes for which they were arrested. We are confident that our request will be heard and processed with the urgency that the gravity of the situation requires, that you will put into operation all the mechanisms at your reach and that you will use the staff and resources that the law assigns for the proper exercise of justice. We place our faith in God and our trust in the authorities of our Government of National Reconstruction. Any information should be forwarded to the Office of the Permanent Commission of Human Rights of Nicaragua (CPDH), Montoya District, 2 blocks to the lake; in this capital city.

10. Relatives of the 24 prisoners who were taken to La Pólvora and who are presumed to have been executed signed the letter. The names of these individuals are as follows:

Maximiliano Jaime López, 47 years old.
Vicente Cuadra Chamorro, 31 years old.
Alberto Varillas Chamorro, 45 years old.
Luis Rey López Cajina, 24 years old.
Hernaldo López Cajina, 20 years old.
Amado López Cajina, 22 years old.
David Salvador Argüello Pasos, 40 years old.
Bismarck Rodríguez Salazar, 41 years old.
Julio César Urbina Vargas, 48 years old.
Gustavo Adolfo Marín Guzmán, 23 years old.
Julio Morales Carache, 41 years old.
Iván Alfonso Molina Mercado, 21 years old.
Luis Martínez Mercado, 42 years old.
Diego Carrillo Cruz, 45 years old.
Armando Mercado Muñoz, 20 years old.
Armando Mercado Mora, 54 years old.
Antonio Pérez Sequeira, 36 years old.
José Mercedes Alonso Pasos, 36 years old.
Juan Alfredo Rojas Silva, 22 years old.
Jorge Villalobos Toruño, 42 years old.
Exequiel Zavala Jiménez, 49 years old.
Roberto José Marenco Ramírez, 18 years old.
Modesto Orlando Mayorga Ricera, 47 years old.
Ignacio Muñoz Espinoza, 25 years old.

11. During its visit to Nicaragua, the Commission received denunciations that the following prisoners disappeared from La Pólvora prison in July 1979, and are presumed to have been executed:

José Antonio Arroliga Ríos, 16 years old.
Víctor Manuel Murillo Hurtado, 24 years old.
José Octavio Vásquez Miranda, 37 years old.
José Vicente López Morales, 22 years old.
Juan Francisco Mayorga Rivas, 45 years old.
William José Vargas Alaniz, 24 years old.

12. Later, the Government of Nicaragua informed the Commission that the Supreme Court, by means of an official letter dated May 18, 1981, ordered the Examining Judge to continue the proceedings and to report the findings to the Supreme Court. To date, the Commission has received no further information.

Annex 14

Sandinista Prisons

Following document is a report by the Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua (CPDH) on the prison system under the Sandinistas.

Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua
Report on
The Prison Situation
Nicaragua 1985

There are three principal types of prisons for political prisoners in Nicaragua, all administered by the Ministry of Interior. They are: prisons for investigation run by the General Directorate of State Security (DGSE) called Units of State Security Operations; the general prisons of the National Penitentiary System, called Centers for Social Rehabilitation; and third, the so-called Open Farms System.

State Security in Nicaragua functions outside the laws of the country. Since the National State of Emergency was declared in March 1982, habeas corpus has been suspended. Some international organizations have requested that the government restore this recourse in order to guarantee the minimum rights of prisoners. In August 1984, the government reinstated habeas corpus for common prisoners only. A person can be indefinitely investigated, or can be tortured or subjected to maltreatment and there is no legal mechanism to change the situation. Thus, all types of violations of prisoners' rights are committed.

State Security Prisons

There are nine Centers of State Security Operations in Nicaragua, one for each Special Region or Zone in the country.

The most prominent among these is the prison known as El Chipote, located in the city of Managua on the slopes by Tiscapa Lake, where the jails of the Office of National Security were located in the time of the Somoza dictatorship. This prison has been remodeled to make the situation for prisoners even more difficult. The bars were removed and replaced with metal plates or doors. These have a tiny window in the middle which is opened from the outside and used for handing in food. These cells are below the surface, that is to say they are underground. They are ventilated by a tube which comes through the ceilings of the cells from the outside, or by a slot at the bottom or at the top of the door. Most of the time, the prisoners are kept in total darkness and in a few instances there is a light which is kept on all the time so that they cannot tell whether it is day or night. The sanitary facilities in these cells consist of small holes in the floor, which in some cases have fluorescent paint on the edges so that the prisoners can locate it in the dark.

In almost all the cases, the prisoners remain incommunicado or in solitary confinement, and they are taken out only when they are allowed visits from their relatives, which take place in the presence of one or two Security officials who do not allow the prisoners to talk about their problems or their physical situation to their families. Once the visits are over, the prisoners return to solitary confinement.

The prisoners are identified only by number so as to prevent them from knowing the names of other prisoners in other cells and also to depersonalize them. Prisoners must keep their heads down, looking at the floor, when walking through the corridors and halls of the prison, and when they stop they must face the closest wall. They are not allowed to speak without permission and must call the jailers "officer." Moreover, they must stand up immediately when an "officer" comes to their cells. If they do not follow the rules, they are punished.

Torture and Maltreatment

Among the variety of methods of investigation or ways used to obtain statements from prisoners in State Security prisons accused of counterrevolutionary activities, we found some in common use:

- Periods of isolation, the duration of which depends on the "collaboration" the prisoners give to the soldiers, that is to say, accepting and signing the accusations against them, implicating others in counterrevolutionary activities, or participating in televised films to accuse people or organizations opposed to the government. Usually a prisoner is prosecuted six or seven months after his arrest.
- Hanging prisoners by their hands for several days, with rubber protectors at the places where they are attached, in order to leave no physical traces.
- Forcing prisoners to do "physical exercise" completely naked regardless of their sex or age. While they do these exercises, they are taunted by their guards.

- Beating prisoners in handcuffs or tied with wires during interrogation. This type of torture has been reported especially at the State Security prisons in the interior of the country and is normally used against peasants, although it has also been brutally used on people known to be from Managua.
- Denial of food and water for continuous or alternating periods in order to obtain statements.
- Putting prisoners into barrels of water at the mercy of the elements for two or three days at a time, especially in the prisons known as LA BARRANCA in Esteli, and LA PERRERA in Matagalpa, areas of Nicaragua with the coldest temperatures.
- Raping female prisoners.
- Staging fake executions in which the prisoners are taken out of their cells at midnight and made to dig holes in the ground which are supposedly their own graves, or firing unloaded guns at the temples of prisoners during interrogations.
- Making the prisoners listen to the supposed voices of their loved ones, such as their wife, their mother, their children, etc., making them believe that they are also in jail.
- Blackmailing innocent prisoners, setting them free on condition that they become informers for State Security.
- Using medicines or drugs before interrogation which leave the prisoners in a semiconscious state. When the effects of the drugs wear off, the prisoners do not remember what they said.

The Commission has been concerned that international human rights organizations which have dealt with the case of Nicaragua in one way or another have not taken up the problems and situation of the State Security prisons. We must say that no human rights organizations nor even doctors from the International Committee of the Red Cross are allowed to visit these prison centers, particularly El Chipote. The prisoners who receive visitors are transferred to a Public Relations office outside the jail.

In addition to the principal or known State Security jails, there are a large number of secret jails or interrogation centers. Some are located in the outskirts of cities and resemble country homes, where the prisoners are taken to be subjected to intense interrogations, normally for short periods of four or five days.

State Security also has a large number of private homes at its disposal, apparently occupied by normal families, but which have one or two rooms set aside. Members of opposition political parties, independent unions, or other organizations critical of the government are brought there and pressured to become State Security informers.

Prisons of the National Penitentiary System

The situation of the jails under the control of the National Penitentiary System, particularly the centers known as CARCEL MODELO in the municipality of Tipitapa and the ZONA FRANCA prison in Managua, which house the largest number of prisoners, has the following characteristics:

- In the jail known as ZONA FRANCA, where there are approximately 3,000 common and political prisoners (who are separated), there are no sanitary facilities in the cells. The prisoners are taken out only three times a day to take care of their physiological needs. In the cells there are metal receptacles in which the prisoners defecate and urinate. This causes an unbearable smell in the cells, in addition to being a source of infection for the prisoners. The cells are overcrowded, and in cells with 15 bunks stacked one on top of the other, there are normally 30 or 35 prisoners, so many of them sleep on the floor.
- The food is completely inadequate and normally consists of a scoop of rice or beans for each meal.
- In order for relatives to visit, they have to spend long hours in the sun. The people who come from places outside Managua have to sleep in the areas surrounding the prisons. The visits themselves take place in the sun. At this time, political prisoners are allowed only one visit every three months.
- There are constant threats to the prisoners' lives when the military situation worsens. In some cases, the prisoners have spent hours in front of machine guns, waiting for supposed attacks by the "contra."
- When the prisoners are transferred to public places, such as courtrooms, they are dressed in prison garb, which consists of short pants and sleeveless shirts.
- Prisoners are allowed to receive only 20 pounds of food and items such as clothing, personal hygiene products, etc., during visits.
- It is absolutely forbidden to bring salt or citrus fruits.
- In both the ZONA FRANCA and CARCEL MODELO, several collective punishments are commonly used. These "punishments" include suspending

visits and placing certain prisoners in special cells called "extermination" cells or in hermetically sealed vehicles sitting in the sun. In cases where prisoners have been subjected to beatings, the CPDH has reported these events to the Interior Ministry, with the full names of those responsible, but we have never heard of a single investigation taking place.

- The untimely transfer of prisoners to other jails without notifying relatives is another measure frequently employed. Five prisoners serving 30-year prison sentences in the Carcel Modelo were transferred in October 1983 and are still in the State Security prison known as El Chipote. These prisoners are being subjected to new interrogations about the events for which they were sentenced.
- Sick prisoners have great difficulty being transferred to health centers, in spite of legal orders issued by forensic doctors to that effect. Usually the Penitentiary System authorities state that the prisoners are well and that they can be treated in the prisons, where cells have been improvised to serve as "clinics" staffed by military personnel.
- The important work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) should be pointed out, especially as it provides additional food to the prisoners as well as personal hygiene products and care for the sick. Usually, however, their recommendations regarding diet or special treatment are not heeded, and sometimes the personal hygiene products donated by the ICRC are taken away.

In February 1985, the prisoners in Gallery Number Three of the Carcel Modelo tried to hold a hunger strike to demand less time between visits, regulation of the right to sunlight, and better treatment from their jailers, who usually refer to them as "dogs," "beasts," "henchmen," etc. This gallery was immediately taken over by the military and family visits were suspended indefinitely. The presumed organizers of the protest were transferred to El Chipote, and those who had supported them were put into small cells, where they stayed handcuffed to each other for several days, in such crowded quarters that they could not even lie down.

Open Farms System

Finally, there are detention centers called the "Open Farms System" (*Granjas de Regimen Abierto*) where the prisoners live under more favorable conditions, particularly in that they are allowed to work during the day and are not kept in cells. They are also allowed continuous visits from their families.

The prisoners in these jails are for the most part lower-ranking ex-members of the defunct National Guard who after five years in jail have become trustworthy prisoners, others who are about to finish serving their sentences, and some who have functioned as "informers" on the other prisoners.

The CPDH fully approves the operation of these centers, which have small numbers of prisoners. But what it does not approve is the fact that this treatment does not extend to the thousands of prisoners in the Penitentiary System and State Security prisons, and that they are intended to fool public opinion.

We must state that these open farms are prisons for "export": their main function has been to serve as showplaces to make international delegations and organizations visiting the country admire the "Nicaraguan prison system." During the visits, prisoners perform in cultural programs, sing, and dance, in order to give the best possible impression to the visitors, who usually do not hear about the other prisons.

Managua, September 11, 1985

Annex 15

The Sandinista Defense Committees

The Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS) are "block committees" modeled after the Cuban Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR). These organizations are an integral part of the Sandinistas' internal security apparatus and are described by the FSLN as "the eyes and ears of the revolution." The following document is a translation of a report on the CDS by the Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua.

Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua
Report On
The Sandinista Defense Committees

Background

The Civil Defense Committees were organized by the Sandinista Front and the leftist organizations of the United People's Movement in 1977 for the objective of organizing different neighborhoods in order to support armed insurrection and to develop the structure in them for the civil defense of the population. Early in their existence they accepted all persons without ideological discrimination and their membership was broad-based. In principle the Defense Committees were to limit themselves to conducting activities of social advancement. However, after the revolution triumphed, the leaders of the Sandinista Front decided to make substantial changes in these defense committees, and they became Sandinista Defense Committees and were incorporated into the Sandinista Party mass organizations. Thus, they have the following objectives:

- Disseminating Sandinista ideology and pressuring citizens to participate in the political activities of the Sandinista Party;
- Encouraging citizens to become members of the FSLN;
- Pressuring and forcing citizens in case they do not join voluntarily;
- Exercising political and military control over the people.

Organizational Structure

The basic structure of these Sandinista Defense Committees consists of a Coordinator, a Secretary, and an official for each subcommittee, including political, health, culture, sports, supplies, and finance. In turn, these street or block committees are affiliated with what is called a Sandinista Neighborhood Committe, and the neighborhood committees are affiliated with a Zone Committee. Although it is generally assumed that citizens who are members of the various committees participate in governmental action by discussing community problems and finding solutions, the opposite is true. The Zone committees transmit guidelines and instructions to the District Committees from the high-level political leaders, that is to say the National Directorate of the Sandinista Front, and they in turn tell the Defense Committee of the block or street what it is to do.

To support the cost of maintaining this whole structure, the neighbors are obliged to pay a monthly or weekly fee to cover the costs of the office, paper, secretaries, and office supplies. Although they are not state organizations, their national and international activities are financed by the Junta of Reconstruction with the taxpayers' money.

Repressive Organizations

The Sandinista Defense committees are designed to control the people, and since they are primarily partisan in nature, their activities are directed toward protecting the interests of the Sandinista Front and not the interests of the community. Although participation is supposed to be voluntary, people are constantly coerced to become involved in partisan activities, and those who do not participate in the tasks assigned to them by the Sandinista Defense Committees are denied the letter of recommendation required by the government offices for drivers licenses, business licenses, loan applications, job applications, police records, etc.

a) Control of Citizens

[The citizens are controlled] through reports prepared by the coordinators for the neighborhood committee, which record participation by the citizens in the various activities that are to be conducted. Some are social activities, but the people are forced to join so that they can be used for partisan propaganda purposes.

The primary form of control is taking censuses of the population, which, in addition to providing financial information, are used to gather political data and information. Each head of household must answer political questions, for example: How many persons live in this house? What are their occupations? Where do they work? To what political party do they belong? How much do they earn? Where was their previous residence? To what mass organization do they belong? etc.

b) Rationing

Rationing is one of the main weapons these organizations use to control and pressure Nicaraguans. Thus the Sandinista Party uses hunger to punish all persons who refuse to participate in their political activities, by withdrawing or cancelling their rationing card for ½ kilogram of rice, ½ kilogram of sugar, 1 liter of milk, 1 liter of oil, 1 cake of soap, and 1 roll of toilet paper per person per week.

c) **Revolutionary Vigilance**

The Sandinista Defense Committees' contribution to the defense of the Sandinista revolutionary process entails having certain neighbors spy openly on others. Spying is accomplished through house-to-house visits in which members of the community are pressured to keep watch (by turns) over the block in which their house is located and to make daily reports to the police and State Security. The houses of persons who refuse to cooperate are plastered with signs that say "Here lives a counterrevolutionary, keep watch" or "Contra, we are watching you."

d) **Refusal of Letters**

As the Sandinista system of government was organized, the defense committees together with the other mass organizations were included as managerial entities for the implementation of projects and programs. For this reason letters from the Sandinista Defense Committees are essential prerequisites for paperwork in government offices. The coordinators refuse to issue these letters to persons who, because of ideological differences, do not participate in the activities they organize in their neighborhoods. In this way, many persons are prevented from obtaining licenses, registering in educational centers, working, and obtaining loans from banks.

e) **Proselytizing Organizations and Shock Forces**

People are forced to make posters and signs, paint walls, visit houses in the neighborhood, and transmit information and obligatory invitations or to participate in political activities. These activities are used as a specific channel for FSLN political mobilization. They are also used as shock forces to put down all persons or political groups that do not support the Sandinista ideology, using subterfuge or force, by attacking these people physically, destroying their property, or threatening to have them arrested.

Conclusions

The Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua, in view of the reports of abuses committed by these partisan organizations, considers it appropriate to note that:

1. The CDS constitute a repressive structure created by the Sandinista Front and established throughout the nation in order to put down its political opponents and control citizens in general.
2. A partisan organization that is involved in the structure of the state by developing projects and social programs, the Sandinista party has institutionalized violations of the most basic rights of the Nicaraguan people.
3. Constantly coercing citizens to participate in the political activities of the Sandinista party and making distinctions between persons according to their political ideologies are violations of the Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans:
    a. Article 3 on equality before the law without distinctions based on race, sex, opinions, or financial standing;
    b. Article 18 prohibiting arbitrary or illegal interference in the private lives of individuals;
    c. Article 19 prohibiting coercive measures that could infringe upon freedom of thought and conscience;
    d. Article 31 (1) on the freedom of individuals to meet and associate.
4. We make special mention of the use of blackmail by these organizations by rationing basic products in order to use hunger to put down all citizens who do not share their political interests. This strategy is a violation of Article 38 (2), which provides for: "Eradication of chronic malnutrition, by assuring the availability of an adequate supply of food and the equitable distribution thereof."

Managua, November 26, 1984

Annex 16

The Sandinista Educational System

The Sandinistas have introduced their Marxist revolutionary ideology into Nicaragua's school system in order to indoctrinate the country's youth. The following report on the educational system was prepared by the Permanent Commission on Human Rights.

Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua
Report on Violation of Academic Rights in Nicaragua

Background

When the Sandinista leaders came to power on July 19, 1979, they declared education a priority area and began to implement a revolutionary educational project. The new educational system was established as an ideological weapon in the pursuit of a change in the ideological, political, and social system; this new system is intended to indoctrinate the teacher and the student in the objectives of the Sandinista party and to create through the educational system the type of citizen who meets the requirements of the political and economic program of the Sandinista People's Revolution.

In keeping with these general plans, in August 1979 the beginning of the National Literacy Crusade was announced, and it became the most important strategic undertaking since the war of liberation. The National Literacy Crusade was based on two objectives: one educational and the other political.

The educational objective was to lower the illiteracy rate; the political objective was to disseminate Sandinista ideology throughout the nation. During the technical training workshops for the Great National Literacy Crusade, they insisted that the political aspect should be emphasized, using the lessons as a point of departure. When the National Literacy Crusade ended, the Ministry of Public Education called a national consultation on the purposes and objectives of the new educational system in Nicaragua. The working document proposed by this Ministry submitted five objectives for consideration by all sectors of the nation:

1. Educating a new man in political, personal, and social terms.
2. Training in and for creative work.
3. Instilling a consciousness of the economic value of productive work.
4. Instilling the values of the Sandinista People's Revolution.
5. Instilling the thoughts and example of the heroes and martyrs.

The document was approved by the Ministry of Education on March 1, 1983. It omitted the suggestions from various sectors including the National Union of Associations of Parents of the Catholic schools, which criticized the partisan nature of the working document and proposed that education incorporate universal ethical values, suggesting the principles of Christianity for this purpose.

On the basis of the aforementioned objectives, the educational project became part of the platform of a political party that formulates its educational policies according to the Marxist theory of education, that is, education and production. Accordingly it implemented the School-Work program, in which the students are required to work in educational centers or various State Production Units (UPE). Both the students and the teachers are obliged to attend workshops of various kinds, which are aimed at the best political preparation and the evaluation and supervision of the programs developed in the educational institutions.

The political and educational guidelines tend to instill knowledge in a dogmatic manner, limiting knowledge of the truth to the interpretation of Marxist theory. Along these lines, the practical educational activities are presented to national and international public opinion as voluntarily supported by the students. Notwithstanding, this facade conceals repressive measures, such as the need to present reports of participation in practical productive activities in order to register for or to be promoted from courses, in violation of the right of every individual to an education, which the State is obligated to provide to all.

Both the intermediate and higher educational institutions are subject to the government party provisions of the National Council of Higher Education (CNES) and the Ministry of Education (MED).

In 1980, the change in the curriculum began, and certain departments changed their course offerings year by year, disrupting the academic training of future professionals, and the operational and academic rules of higher education were also changed.

The Sandinista Youth-July 19 (JS19) created the Nicaraguan National Student Union (UNEN) which assumed responsibility for the union, political, and social activity of the Nicaraguan university student body. Under its regulations all students must mandatorily belong to this partisan student organization and have no free choice about membership. In like manner, in the secondary schools and intermediate educational centers, partisan student and teaching organizations have infringed upon the freedom of association provided for in the Fundamental Statute.

In 1981 the student leaders of the opposition parties were attacked physically and verbally when they attempted to conduct their political activities at the universities, whose autonomy, like that of the private schools, has disappeared. The National University and the Private University have been merged and are controlled by the State. Academic freedom does not exist, for the professors must follow the political and educational lines of the government party. Regular class schedules are frequently disrupted, because the classrooms are used for political activities.

Situation of Intermediate Education

The years 1980-81 were years of transformation in the educational system. The Document on the Purposes and Objectives of Education in Nicaragua states that the parents' freedom to select schools other than those established by the State will be respected. Notwithstanding, the State imposes on the public as well as private levels the type of instruction it considers consistent with its political interests.

Since the Sandinista government began to change the educational system, the private institutions have been financially stranded. In 1980 the government prohibited an increase in secondary school fees and set a "voluntary quota"; in 1983 a government prohibition ended this measure. At the end of 1983 the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction publicized its offer, through the Ministry of Education, to subsidize private educational institutions, a considerable percentage of which are religiously oriented. This offer was made for political and strategic reasons in an effort to exercise even stricter control over the education offered by these institutions.

One constant since the transformation began has been the continuous interference by Ministry of Education supervisors in private school teaching activities. In each institution there are persons who monitor the activities of the teaching staff to ensure that they all duly follow the directives of the Ministry of Education. This leads to a loss of autonomy at various educational institutions.

Both public and private educational centers were regionalized and subdivided into networks to ensure that the provisions are enforced at the departmental and national level. In doing so, the Ministry of Education determined the course of studies. It slowed down the private institutions so that other centers within the network could catch up. The time that the students spend in the normal course of learning various subjects is lost, because as the end of the school year approaches the time they have to assimilate the material to be covered is reduced.

Ideologically, the potential for organization is limited and is the exclusive prerogative of FSLN party organizations. In December 1980 the Ministry of Education regulated the election of the student leaders by establishing the following requirements:

1. Outstanding scholarship
2. Representativeness
3. Enthusiasm for the work of the revolution

This regulation is intended to elect students who will be channels for the concerns of the student body and at the same time will ensure the integration of the new education and the accomplishment of the tasks assigned by the Nicaraguan revolution. (Agreement 120 AA, *Gaceta* No. 24 of January 31, 1981).

This agreement on rules for elections of student representatives is not the only one connected with the introduction of partisan propaganda into the educational system. The Secondary Education regulation (Agreement No. 20 ALPPAS of September 12, 1983) refers explicitly to certain partisan political features. The specific responsibilities of the Director include the statement that he shall "guarantee that throughout the entire teaching process at the institution the students are instructed according to the Purposes, Objectives, and Principles of the New Education" (Art. 13 (1) (a)). The text states that they shall "maintain close collaboration with the people's organizations and use their help in order to improve the education efforts for the complete formation of the students" (Art. 13 (1) (c)). The teacher's responsibilities include, among others, "incorporating political, ideological, scientific, educational, and cultural material into his work in order to comply with the principles that govern educational activities " (Art. 23 (b)), and "helping to consolidate the National Association of Nicaraguan Teachers, the Sandinista Youth–July 19, and the Association of Parents by supporting and participating in the work of these organizations" (Art. 23 (o)).

For the teachers, "attacking the order and security of the Revolutionary State, failing to follow educational policy, failing to respect the symbols of the nation and the revolution" are considered very serious errors, among others (Art. 27 (a, b, c)).

For the students, very serious errors are considered to include "having attitudes inconsistent with the principles of the Sandinista People's Revolution and with the memory of the heroes and martyrs" and "physical aggression toward fellow students and/or teachers" (Art. 77(c)). Nevertheless, the Sandinista Youth–July 19 (JS19J) attacks students and teachers physically and intellectually, going to extremes in which it exerts pressure on higher authorities to have students expelled and teachers withdrawn and forced to stop teaching at various educational centers.

It may be inferred from the foregoing that lists of teachers who demonstrate independence from the political and educational policies are kept for repressive purposes, in the same way that Sandinista Youth–July 19 maintains strict control over those students who dissent and profess ideologies which differ from that of the government party.

The Catholic schools have not escaped this repressive measure, and the dissemination of religious information is abusively prevented by members of partisan organizations of the Sandinista Front. In certain Catholic schools which are being subsidized by the state, there are confrontations between students and teachers because of the existing conflict between Christian principles and the government party ideology, and this has led to widespread protests from the parents.

Situation of Nicaraguan Teachers

We obtained several opinions from teachers who disagree with the teaching standards established by the Sandinista government. According to them, the basic problem with education in Nicaragua is the extreme politicization of the educational system, caused by its underlying materialistic philosophy in which the principles of teaching are subordinated to partisan political interests and a dogmatic interpretation of economic, political, and social reality. This educational system impedes the development of universal humanitarian values (freedom, justice, brotherhood, love, and democracy) because they are not a part of the social order that is being established.

The Ministry of Education has claimed to be seeking a type of education that will engender brotherly cooperation between all participants in the educational process. The reality, however, is an alienating, repressive, and snooping education that is primarily intended to raise the political consciousness of the students. To this end they have created a bureaucratic system and established a series of programs, such as adult education, vocational training, remedial education, school-work programs, and others.

The regulations governing education require collaboration with the mass organizations, and these exert pressure on the schools, on the Evaluation, Programming, and Educational Training workshops (TEPCE), and on the teachers' union assemblies to force them to participate in the proselytizing campaign that the Sandinista Front has been conducting from the time it came to power until the announcement of the elections.

In one of the first workshops conducted and allegedly designed to improve teaching skills it was observed that emphasis was placed on the teacher's political activities, as in the specific example of Evaluation, Programming, and Educational Training workshop No. 1 of this year, which we describe in detail:

Subject: "The 1984 Electoral Process." (Speech given by Commander of the Revolution Carlos Nunez Tellez).

The key questions were:

1) What is meant by the process of institutionalizing the Revolution?
2) What considerations should be taken into account in extending the right to vote to youths 16 years of age?
3) What is most important in the Electoral Campaign of a political party?
   a) The candidate
   b) The government platform
   (Explain your answer)
4) What is the attitude of the Patriotic Front of the Revolution toward the elections?
5) Why do the parties of the "Ramiro Sacasa Guerrero" Coordinating Board not have a similar position?
6) How should we teachers participate in the elections?

This working document states, "Our principal form of participation is centered around the ideological work we must perform with our students and the sectors with which we have contact. Defend Sandinista ideology, combat ideological deviationism and the reactionary ideas of the right."

The entire educational system is designed to manipulate both teachers and students politically, and it does so at times by forcing the parents to participate in political activities as an essential requirement for obtaining their children's report cards.

Following the lines of the national leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, the Sandinista Youth–July 19 has begun to consolidate the Sandinista Children's Association (ANS) in educational centers in order to indoctrinate Nicaraguan children, so that when they reach secondary school they will already be members of Sandinista Youth–July 19.

The National Association of Nicaraguan Teachers, far from defending union interests, cooperates with the Sandinista regime by preparing lists of teachers who are not in agreement with party lines. In union meetings many teachers are afraid to express their views, lest they be persecuted, imprisoned, and fired from their jobs.

Situation of Independent Youth Political Organizations

The present educational system impedes the development of independent political youth organizations whose leaders are subjected to repressive measures and harassment by the Sandinista Youth-July 19 and the General Directorate of State Security. Their potential for organization has declined gradually since 1980, when Luis Molina Lacayo, a law clerk and member of the Conservative Youth, was seized, accused of counterrevolutionary activities, and unjustly imprisoned for 10 months in the Zona Franca Penitentiary.

In 1981 the Independent Student Federation (FEI) was founded; it was disbanded by order of *Comandante* Tomas Borge Martinez, who said that the organization was counterrevolutionary and therefore must be suppressed. The members of the Independent Student Federation and their sympathizers suffered physical aggression from the Sandinista mass organizations.

In 1982, as a result of the incidents involving Father Bismarck Carballo, in certain Catholic schools the students organized a civic protest against the show that implicated the Catholic priest. The protest led to physical agression by the mass organizations who came to the Managua Teacher's Institute (IPM), *Colegio Teresiano, Pureza de Maria* and others. At the Teacher's Institute the clergy decided to close the main doors in view of the aggression; they were opened by a Sandinista police officer, who shouted to the worked up *turba* (mob), "You take care of the bourgeois, and I'll take care of the director." As a result, they fractured the hand of a young woman from *Colegio La Asuncion*—now *Liceo Anunciacion*—a large number of people were beaten, and the main student leaders were arrested by the Sandinista Police.

In March 1983, the student leaders founded the Student Unification Movement. It was not supported by the directors of private schools because the educational system as it is designed does not allow for the formation of youth movements similar to Sandinista Youth-July 19. Beginning in June 1983, the young political leaders were repressed to an unimagined extent, such as the seizure of young Mario Castillo Mendoza, President of Conservative Youth, who was implicated in counterrevolutionary activities. On September 21, 1983, Raul Llanos Ramos, Deputy Secretary for Political Training of the Democratic Conservative Party and a delegate to the National Convention, together with his brother Eduardo Llanos, delegate to the National Convention from the Department of Managua, who were studying at the Gaspar Garcia Laviana Institute, were seized by members of State Security at their home. Their relatives do not know the charges against them, and they have been turned over to the special courts known as People's Anti-Somocista Tribunals.

At the end of 1983, parents who had their children in the Managua Teacher's Institute had problems with the Director of the Center when they found that the clergy assigned to the school were departing from the intended purposes of Christian education and were advocating partisan activities, following the lines of the Popular Church, and refusing to allow the freedom of expression and organization that is consistent with educational purposes and objectives. On the basis of a conference arranged by the leaders of the Patriotic Front of the Revolution, Edgard Zuniga was expelled from the Teacher's Institute for dissenting publicly from the political lines upheld during the conference, and Ninoska Perez was also expelled from that school.

The conflict at the Managua Teacher's Institute became most heated when the director dismissed 14 teachers, the majority of whom had taught at that school for over 15 years. The administrators forced the teaching staff to sign a document opposing the Association of Parents. During the civil defense courses the students succeeded in obtaining 320 signatures in support of the dismissed teachers, and those who conducted this activity were expelled.

Situation of Higher Education

Higher education is not exempt from the political education program imposed by the Sandinista government. Political interference has occurred since the triumph of the revolution, and the first step was the National Literacy Crusade that went into effect in 1980 for all sectors of Nicaraguan society. Although it is true that students were not pressured to participate in the Crusade, incentives in certain educational areas were observed, since the students were compensated for their collaboration by passing their classes. This measure caused a considerable decline in student academic performance, since instruction in required subjects became inadequate. Another consequence of the Literacy Crusade was that classes were suspended nationally for eight months.

During that same year an attempt to expand the youth organizations of the various political parties was made and failed because repressive measures were taken against the members of these organizations.

After 1981 the university student body was required to perform productive work; it frequently was unrelated to the students' professional training and was intended to make use of their labor. This work was an essential requirement for promotion each year.

In 1982 the student-aide movement was established as a solution to the shortage of professionals. They took over the teaching load at the higher level and alleviated the shortage of teachers at that time. Nevertheless, this measure further aggravated the decline in academic training, since the students who participated in this program were selected on the basis of political, not academic, criteria, and students who were qualified to teach were rejected because they did not meet the requirements of political membership in the various Sandinista mass organizations. These organizations have control over the ideology and organization of the student body's political activities by subordinating all educational activities to their partisan interests. In certain cases they go so far as to organize demonstrations against teachers or students to pressure the administrative authorities to expel them. That happened to Dr. Roger Guevara Mena, Professor of International Law at the Central American University, who refused to allow a student to remain in the classroom on March 21, 1983, because he was wearing a military uniform and carrying a weapon, which is prohibited under the university regulations. On the following day members of Sandinista Youth came to the classroom where he was lecturing, accused him of ideological deviationism, and violently expelled him from the campus. The Central American University administrative authorities supported this injustice by forcing Dr. Guevara to resign.

In May of that year, three students from the National Autonomous University School of Architecture were threatened by members of this partisan organization, who reprimanded them and decided two days later to expel them from the school. The Sandinista Youth mobilized its members at the Preparatory School, approximately 2,000 in number; they surrounded the classroom where the three were taking a class with the School Director, shouted slogans, and accused them of being ideological deviationists and counterrevolutionaries. When the *turba* [mob] could not identify them, one of their classmates pointed them out, and the *turba* began to form a human cordon. The students were thrown out of the classroom and taken to Auditorium 12 of the Ruben Dario University Campus. Meanwhile, they were physically assaulted, shaved, and had their clothing ruined. In the auditorium where the Sandinista Television System cameras were waiting, they were presented to the Sandinista student body as social disgraces and covered with oil paint. Subsequently the rector of the university called all the students to an assembly to explain what had happened. He informed the students that the same measures would be taken with students whose attitudes conflicted with the Sandinista regime.

Principal Cases of Violations of Academic Rights Submitted to the Permanent Commission on Human Rights

Case: Luis Prendiz Borge

1978: Since that date he was a professor of foreign languages (English) at Las Brisas Institute, today known as Manuel Olivares Institute.

February 4, 1983: He went to the aforementioned school to prepare his classes for school year 1983. He was summoned to the Administrative Office, where he was handed his letter of notice [of dismissal], signed by Mr. Edgardo Jerez Talavera, informing him that the work he had done during 1982 was not in the interest of the Sandinista Educational System.

February 12, 1983: Accompanied by Professor Amadeo Arroliga, he attended a meeting at the departmental offices of the Ministry of Education. At that meeting Mr. Jerez Talavera repeated that both professors had been fired because they were not orienting students politically. Winston Curtis, Regional Director of the Ministry of Education, prohibited them from returning to the schools.

Case: Salesian School in Masaya

July 12, 1983: Father Luis Corral Prieto, Director of the Salesian School in Masaya, together with other school directors, was called to a meeting at 2 p.m. with the Regional Official of the Ministry of Education to discuss matters related to the leaking of semester examinations.

3:30 p.m.: Mr. Virgilio Hernandez informed him, among other things, of a unilateral decision by the Ministry of Education to begin a crafts course on the premises of the Salesian School and his concern about the possibility of Committees being formed to organize a political protest on August 16 to commemorate the anniversary of the death of young Eddy Guzman and the military intervention at Salesian School.

5 p.m.: There was another meeting at the house of the National Association of Nicaraguan Teachers for Consultative Councils and local authorities of the Ministry of Education which Father Corral Prieto was unable to attend. During this meeting the Regional Delegation of the Sandinista Front attacked and misrepresented the activities which were to be held by both the Catholic Church and the Salesian Congregation on August 14, 15 and 16, 1983.

July 13, 1983: Father Corral Prieto was informed by two people that the mass organizations were preparing a demonstration in order to take over the Salesian School.

October 1, 1983: The Sandinista Government expelled Fathers Luis Corral Prieto and Jose Maria

Pacheco, accusing them of conducting political activities detrimental to the laws of the Revolutionary State.

Case: Berman Beteta Flores and Isabel Ferreti Martinez

April 4, 1983: Nine people came to Mr. Beteta's home and conducted a search during which they found documents accrediting his father Trinidad Beteta Hernandez as a former member of the Confederation for Labor Unification (CUS). He was taken to sub-station No. 5 of Colonia Centroamericana and accused of possession of weapons and drugs. During the interrogation, they insisted that he collaborate by becoming a Sandinista Police informer.

July 17, 1983: He was arrested on the eve of the Anniversary of the Revolution because he was considered a potential counterrevolutionary.

August 23, 1983: They were summoned to Sandinista Police sub-station No. 5 Colonia Centroamericana and threatened.

September 21, 1983: They were again summoned to Sandinista Police sub-station No. 5 of Colonia Centroamericana.

November 27, 1983: Together with Isabel Ferreti, he participated in a discussion with a classmate, who was the daughter of the CDS Coordinator and a member of the Sandinista Youth–July 19, referring to the suspension of the examinations on account of non-attendance; Mr. Beteta Flores argued that this punishment did not apply to members of the Sandinista Youth.

November 28, 1983: He was attacked with Isabel Ferreti by members of the Sandinista Youth–July 19 who were supported by Sandinista Police officers. They sought protection from the Director of their school (Salvador Mendieta) who told them that they had to become Sandinistas or leave the country.

Case: Managua Teachers' Institute

December 6, 1983: Brother Edwin Maradiaga Lacayo, Director of the Teachers' Institute, submitted a list of instructors for academic year 1984 to the Ministry of Education.

January 2, 1984: Brother Manuel Estrada, the new Director of the Teachers' Institute, informed the Ministry of Education of the new organization of the Center, the congregation's intention to rehire eight of the 13 dismissed instructors, and the need for the Ministry's intervention to cancel any appointments of new instructors as substitutes for those dismissed.

January 3, 1984: Brother Manuel Estrada had a meeting at the Ministry of Education.

January 4, 1984: The Congregation of Brothers of the Christian Schools sent the Ministry of Education two communications proposing their nominations for the offices of Director, Deputy Director, and Secretary, and the list of dismissed instructors. They requested that eight of the dismissed instructors be rehired.

January 10, 1984: Carlos Aguirre Marin, Regional Delegate of the Ministry of Education, Region III, informed Brother Manuel Estrada that the Regional Delegation approved the appointments (Director Brother Javier Miranda, Deputy Director Benito Agustin Diaz, Internal Secretary Margarita Garcia Gaitan) and told them to meet with Mr. Noel Aguilar, the Regional Delegate, so that the appropriate legal procedures could be arranged.

January 11, 1984: In accordance with the requirements, the Congregation of Brothers of the Christian Schools submitted their list of instructors.

January 12, 1984: Carlos Aguirre Marin decided to uphold in its entirety the reorganization of December 6, 1983, presented by Brother Maradiaga.

January 21, 1984: The Ministry of Education confirmed the approval of Brother Edwin Maradiaga's proposal.

The Ministry of Education, in a public communique, announced an alleged total agreement with the new directors. The directors, however, denied this statement and confirmed that the Ministry of Education refused to reinstate the eight instructors for the new academic year, even though it was contrary to the provisions of the Ministry of Labor.

Recommendations

The Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua, considering the serious status of the current educational system, which is controlled by the political interests of the Sandinista Government, and after analyzing the document of the purposes and objectives of the new education in Nicaragua, deems it appropriate to recommend its revision and transformation in order to guarantee:

1. The establishment of educational plans and programs that make it possible to disseminate the various ideological currents;
2. The abolishment of all the interfering and repressive duties assigned to the Sandinista mass organizations;
3. The termination of the political manipulation to which the student body in general is being subjected by the Ministry of Education;
4. Complete freedom of Association and Expression and Academic Freedom for students and teachers who dissent from the ideology of the government party.

Managua, August 20, 1984

Annex 17

Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction Message to the Organization of American States

The following document is the message sent by the junta of the Government of National Reconstruction to Alejandro Orfila, Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), on July 12, 1979, one week before it came to power in Nicaragua. The first of the many commitments the junta made in this letter is "to establish full respect for human rights in our country, in accordance with the United Nations Universal Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and the Charter on Human Rights of the OAS."

Two of the signatories, Violeta de Chamorro and Alfonso Robelo Callejas, left the junta less than a year later when it became apparent that this promise, as well as the others made by the Sandinistas, was not being honored. Mrs. Chamorro has remained in Nicaragua, despite frequent Sandinista harassment, while Robelo has become a leader of the democratic resistance outside Nicaragua.

Message to the Organization of American States

Mr. Secretary General:

As we are doing with the Foreign Ministers of the member countries of that Organization, it is our pleasure to place in your hands the document that contains our "Plan to Achieve Peace" in our heroic and long-suffering homeland, now that the people of Nicaragua have established their political and military victory over the dictatorship.

We have developed that plan on the basis of the resolution adopted by the Seventeenth Meeting of Consultation on June 23, 1979, a Resolution that is historic in every respect, as it demands the immediate replacement of the genocidal Somoza dictatorship, which has now met its end, and backs the installation in our country of a broad-based, democratic government of the kind we ourselves are establishing.

Further, in stating that the solution to the serious problem is exclusively within the jurisdiction of the people of Nicaragua, that Resolution calls for hemispheric solidarity in preserving our people's right to self-determination.

In our "Plan to Achieve Peace," we are presenting to the community of nations in this hemisphere the purposes that have inspired our Government since its establishment and as set forth in our documents and policy statements, some of which we would like to ratify here:

I. Our firm intention to establish full respect for human rights in our country, in accordance with the United Nations Universal Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and the Charter on Human Rights of the OAS. That respect has already become evident in the treatment that the Sandinista National Liberation Front has given to hundreds of prisoners-of-war. Our Government therefore extends an invitation to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to visit our country as soon as this new Government is installed.

II. In order that our installation in Nicaragua come about through a peaceful and orderly transition, the Government of National Reconstruction would view a visit to our country by the foreign ministers of the hemisphere as a gesture of solidarity, and we extend them a warm invitation to come.

III. Our decision to enforce civil justice in our country and to try those incriminated of crimes against our people according to the pre-existing laws. By their heroic struggle, the people have won the right to let justice prevail for the first time in half a century, and will do so within the legal framework and without revenge or indiscriminate reprisals.

IV. Those who have collaborated with the regime and who wish to leave the country, and who are not responsible for the genocide that we have suffered or for other serious crimes that demand trial by the civil courts, may do so with all necessary guarantees, guarantees which the Government of National Reconstruction will demonstrate now and henceforth. The departure of these individuals may be supervised by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and by the International Red Cross.

V. The plan to call Nicaraguans to the first free elections that our country will have in this century, so that they may elect their representatives to the city councils and to a constitutional assembly, and the country's highest-ranking authorities.

Now, Mr. Secretary General, the governments of this hemisphere have their opportunity to publicly declare their solidarity with the fight that our people have waged to bring democracy and justice to Nicaragua.

With the request that you convey the text of this letter to the foreign ministers of the OAS, we present our compliments.

Junta of The Government of National Reconstruction
Violeta de Chamorro, Sergio Ramirez Mercado,
Alfonso Robelo Callejas, Daniel Ortega Saavedra,
Moises Hassan Morales.

Annex 18

Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans

The following document is the "Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans," the "bill of rights" of the revolutionary government of Nicaragua. When it was first made public in 1979—even before the fall of the Somoza regime—it gave the Nicaraguan people hope that the revolution for which they were fighting would put an end to the long nightmare of human rights abuses. On August 21, 1979, the Statute was formally enacted into law as Decree 52.

Tragically, the promise of respect for human rights contained in this Statute has not been kept. The Sandinistas have systematically reduced the protection it offered through a series of emergency decrees, and in practice they regularly ignore even the provisions that remain in effect.

One of the initial abridgments of civil rights was the "Law of State of Economic and Social Emergency," Decree 812, issued on September 9, 1981. The operative paragraphs of this decree read:

> Article 1. In conformity with Article 49 of Decree No. 52 of August 21, 1979, and Article 28 (c) of Decree No. 388 of May 2, 1980, a State of Economic and Social Emergency is decreed throughout the national territory for one year from the date of promulgation of this Decree.
>
> Article 2. The Junta of Government shall in each instance empower the appropriate Ministers of State to enforce the necessary administrative measures for the application of this Law.
>
> Article 3. For the purposes of this Law, the following persons shall be considered to have committed crimes against the economic and social security of the nation and shall be punished by imprisonment for one to three years:
>
> > a. Persons who cause a planned suspension of public or private transportation;
> > b. Persons who destroy raw materials, agricultural or industrial products, production instruments, or infrastructure to the detriment of national resources or consumers, irrespective of the criminal liability incurred by the commission of other offenses;
> > c. Persons who spread false information intended to provoke changes in prices, wages, foodstuffs, clothing, merchandise, stocks, securities, or currency;
> > d. Persons who engage in acts of sabotage against production centers, markets, or warehouses to obstruct production or supply efforts;
> > e. Persons who encourage the raising or lowering of prices in the market, hoarding any type of needs, products, or securities, or using other means of speculation;

> f. Persons who incite, abet, or participate in initiating or continuing a strike, stoppage, or takeover at work sites;
> g. Persons who encourage or participate in invasions or takeovers of land in violation of the provisions of the Agrarian Reform Law;
> h. Persons who incite foreign governments and international credit institutions to carry out actions or make decisions injurious to the national economy.

> Article 4. The penalties set forth in the preceding article shall be enforced by means of the procedure described in Decree No. 5. The exercise of the right mentioned in Article 50 of Decree No. 52 of August 21, 1979, as it pertains to the application of this Law by the competent authorities and to the provisions of Article 32, are suspended throughout the national territory. Consequently, exercise of the right to institute an *amparo* [protection] proceeding against administrative measures taken in application of this Law by the authorities mentioned in Article 2 thereof is suspended.

The principal limitation on civil rights followed six months later, when the Sandinistas declared a State of Emergency and suspended virtually all rights guaranteed by Decree 52. The operative paragraphs of "The National Emergency Law," Decree 996 issued March 15, 1982, read:

> Article 1. Throughout the national territory the rights and guarantees set forth in Decree No. 52 of August 21, 1979, are hereby suspended, excepting the provisions of Article 49 (2) of said decree.
>
> Article 2. The present suspension of rights and guarantees shall have a duration of 30 days and may be extended in accordance with circumstances prevailing in the country.
>
> Article 3. This decree supersedes Decree No. 812 of the Law of Economic and Social Emergency. . . .

The State of Emergency, originally declared to have a duration of only 30 days, has been repeatedly extended and has been in effect ever since. During the 1984 electoral campaign, some restrictions were technically lifted, but key provisions of the law, such as censorship, remained in force. On October 15, 1985, President Daniel Ortega announced a new and expanded State of Emergency, reimposing many of the restrictions decreed in 1982. The operative paragraphs of Ortega's October 15 decree read:

> Article 1. The rights and guarantees provided for in Articles 8, 11, 13, 15, 17 (paragraph two), 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 31, 32, and 50 of Decree No. 52 dated August 21, 1979, and its amendments are suspended throughout the national territory.
>
> Article 2. The present suspension of rights and guarantees is for the period of one year.

During the "debate" of Ortega's decree in the National Assembly, the Sandinistas made a few minor revisions in the text of the decree, but its basic provisions were left intact. Thus, Nicaragua under the Sandinistas is a country virtually without fundamental civil rights.

The Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans now stands as a testament to Sandinista deceit: to the liberation the Nicaraguan people thought their revolution would bring, and to the repression that has become the reality of the Sandinista regime.

Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans

The Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction of the Republic of Nicaragua

Considering

I

That the systematic disregard by the Somocista dictatorship of the fundamental rights of the Nicaraguan people and of the human being made possible acts of barbarity insulting to the conscience of humankind; and

II

That freedom, justice and peace are based upon the recognition and affirmation of the fundamental rights of the human being and the community, for which reason it is essential that these rights be protected by the revolutionary government;

Therefore

Making Use of their Faculties Decrees the Following:

Statute on the Rights and Guarantees of Nicaraguans

TITLE I

Rights of the People

Article 1.—The Nicaraguan people have the right to free and full self-determination to establish their political condition and likewise provide for their economic, social and cultural development.

The state shall guarantee by law the direct participation of the people in the fundamental affairs of the nation, both at the national as well as at the local level.

Article 2.—For the achievement of their goals, the Nicaraguan people have the right to freely dispose of their wealth and natural resources, without detriment to obligations derived from international cooperation, based on the principle of reciprocal benefit, solidarity and international law. Under no circumstances shall the Nicaraguan people be deprived of their own means of subsistence.

TITLE II

Individual, Civil and Political Rights

Article 3.—All persons are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection. There shall be no discrimination for reasons of birth, race, color, sex, language, religion, opinions, origin, economic status, or any other social condition.

It is the duty of the state to remove, by any means at its disposal, any obstacles which impede the equality of the citizens and their participation in the country's political, economic and social life.

Article 4.—The state shall respect and shall guarantee for all persons found within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in this Title. Foreigners shall not be allowed to intervene in the country's political affairs.

Article 5.—The right to life is inviolable and inherent to the human being. In Nicaragua there is no death penalty.

Article 6.—Everyone has the right to have his physical, mental, and moral integrity respected. Punishment shall not be extended to any person other than the criminal.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment or treatment. No sentence or sentences, either separately or together, shall exceed a period of thirty years.

Article 7.—No one shall be subject to slavery. Slavery and slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms. No one shall be subject to involuntary servitude or be required to perform forced or compulsory labor. The law shall regulate the compulsory labor and services required in virtue of a judicial decision, of conditional freedom, for military service or social or civil service, for service exacted in time of danger or calamity that threatens the existence or well-being of the community, and the work or service that forms part of normal civic obligations.

Article 8.—Every individual has the right to individual liberty and personal security. No one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest or imprisonment, nor be deprived of his liberty, except for reasons established by law and according to legal procedure.

Consequently:

1.—Detention may only occur when there is a written order from a competent judge or from those authorities explicitly authorized by the law, except in the case of a flagrant crime.

2.—Any person detained shall have the right:

- a). To be informed and notified, without delay, of the reason for his detention and of the accusation, denouncement or charge against him;
- b). To be brought, within a period of 24 hours, before a competent authority, or be released;
- c). To present a petition for personal exhibition;

d). To be treated with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person;

e). To receive indemnity in case of illegal detention or imprisonment.

Article 9.—Accused persons shall be segregated from convicted persons and women from men, and receive treatment appropriate to their status. Minors shall only be brought before juvenile courts and, under no circumstances, shall they be sent to common prisons. Rehabilitation centers shall exist for them under the tutelage of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

Article 10.—The essential aim of the penitentiary system shall be to reform and socially rehabilitate the convict, and it shall attempt to incorporate him into the productive process.

Article 11.—Every person accused of a crime has the right, with full equality, to the following minimum guarantees:

a). To be presumed innocent so long as his guilt has not been proven according to the law;

b). To be informed without delay, in a language he can understand, and in detail, of the nature of and reasons for the accusations formulated against him;

c). To be judged without delay by a competent court. Criminal proceedings should be public, except in some special cases when the press and general public may be excluded from all or part of the trial for reasons of morality, public order, or national security;

d). That his participation be guaranteed from the initiation of the proceedings;

e). That he be permitted real and effective participation in the proceedings and adequate time and means for his defense. When the prisoner does not designate his council at the opening of the trial and is not himself a lawyer, a public defender shall immediately be named to represent him;

f). In case he cannot be found, previous to summons by edict, a public defender will be named to defend him;

g). To be assisted, without charge, by an interpreter if he does not understand or speak the language used by the court;

h). To participate in the contribution and cross-examination of any type of evidence before the final sentence;

i). Not to be compelled to be a witness against himself or to plead guilty;

j). Not to be sentenced to prison without all the evidence required by law having been gathered and that this sentence be dictated within the 10 day period following the order for his arrest;

k). That any person guilty of a criminal offense shall be entitled to appeal the judgment and the sentence imposed to a higher court, according to the law.

l). Not to be prosecuted for a criminal offense for which he has been convicted or acquitted by a nonappealable judgment;

m). Not to be withdrawn from his competent judge.

Article 12.—No one shall be convicted for acts or omissions that, at the time they were committed, did not constitute criminal offenses according to national or international law. Neither shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one applicable at the time the criminal offense was committed. If subsequent to the commission of the offense the law provides for the imposition of a lighter sentence, the guilty person shall benefit therefrom.

Nothing provided for in this article shall be in opposition to the judgment and sentence of a person for acts or omissions that, at the time they were committed, constituted criminal offenses according to the general principles of the law recognized by the international community.

Article 13.—Trial by jury is established for those criminal offenses determined by law.

Article 14.—No one shall be imprisoned solely because he is unable to fulfill a financial obligation, whatever its origin.

Article 15.—Every person who is lawfully within Nicaraguan territory shall have the right to freely move about and freely choose his place of residence. Nicaraguans shall be entitled to freely enter and leave the country.

Article 16.—Anyone persecuted for fighting for the cause of peace and justice, and for the recognition or expansion of human, civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of individuals or groups is guaranteed the right to asylum in Nicaragua. If, for any reason, a person with asylum should be deported, he shall never be returned to the country where he is persecuted.

Extradition shall be regulated by law and international agreements and shall never be carried out for political crimes or common crimes related thereto, according to Nicaraguan judgment. For purposes of extradition, genocide shall not be considered a political crime.

Article 17.—In Nicaragua, every human being is entitled to the recognition of his juridical personality and capacity. Consequently, personal or patrimonal limitations may only be imposed when based on the law, except for those obligations imposed by human solidarity on conduct and abstinence, the duty to behave fraternally, respect for the rights and freedoms of others, and the need to meet the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society, even when these duties are not explicitly established by law.

Article 18.—No person shall be the object of arbitrary or unlawful interference in his private life, his family, his home, his correspondence or his communications; nor of attacks on his honor and reputation, and shall be entitled to the protection of the law against such interferences or attacks.

Especially:

1.—Every person's home and any other private enclosures are inviolable, and may only be entered with a written order from the competent judge, either to impede the committment of a crime or its impunity, or to avoid harm to persons or their property, subject to the law.

2.—Private documents and communications are inviolable. The law shall establish the cases and procedures for the examination or sequestration of private documents, accounting books and their annexes, when it is indispensable in order to clarify matters under investigation by the courts or for fiscal reasons.

Article 19.—No one shall be subject to coercive measures that might impair his freedom of thought, conscience and religion, nor his right to hold or adopt the religion or beliefs of his choice, and freedom to manifest them individually or collectively, in public or in private, by means of worship, celebration of rites, practices and teaching.

Article 20.—Freedom of information is one of the fundamental principles of authentic democracy. Therefore, it cannot be subjugated, either directly or indirectly, to the economic power of any group.

Article 21.—Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right includes freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, either orally, in writing, in print, in the form of art, or through any other medium of one's choice. The exercise of these freedoms entails obligations and responsibilities and, consequently, can be subject to certain formalities, conditions and restrictions established by law, and which are necessary:

a). In the interest of national security and integrity, public safety and the national economy;
b). The defense of order and crime prevention;
c). The protection of health and morality, the dignity of persons and the reputation or the rights of others;
d). To impede the spread of confidential information or to guarantee the authority and the impartiality of the judicial branch.

Article 22.—Any propaganda against peace and any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred is prohibited.

Article 23.—The right of peaceful assembly is recognized. The right to public demonstration shall be regulated by police laws.

Article 24.—Everyone has the right to associate freely with others for licit ends.

Article 25.—All citizens shall enjoy, without restrictions, the following rights:

a). To organize political parties or groups, or belong to them;
b). To take part in the conduct of public affairs, either directly or through freely elected representatives;
c). To present petitions, in writing, both individual and collective, to any public functionary, official entity or public power, and the right to obtain its prompt resolution;
d). To vote and to be elected and to have access, under general conditions of equality, to the public service.

Article 26.—Every person has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality or of the right to change it.

Article 27.—Property, whether it be individually or collectively owned, has a social function, in virtue of which it can have limitations placed upon it, as far as its title, benefit, use and availability, whether it be for reasons of security, public interest or utility, social interest, national economy, national emergency or calamity, or when it is for land reform purposes.

TITLE III

Individual, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Chapter I

Economic Rights

Article 28.—Taking duly into account rights and the national economy, the law shall determine to what extent the economic rights recognized in the present Statute are to be guaranteed for those persons who are not Nicaraguans.

Article 29.—Work is a right and a social responsibility of the individual person. It is the state's duty to procure full and productive employment of all Nicaraguans under conditions which guarantee the fundamental rights of the human being.

Article 30.—Everyone has the right to enjoy just and favorable conditions of work which assure him, especially:

1.—A remuneration which provides workers with, as a minimum:

- a). An equal salary or wage for equal work, under identical conditions of efficiency and appropriate to its social responsibility, without discrimination based on sex;
- b). Dignified living conditions for the worker as well as his family.

2.—Safe and hygienic working conditions.

3.—Equal opportunity for all to be promoted to the superior level they merit, the only limitation being time in service and ability.

4.—Rest, the enjoyment of leisure time, a reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic vacations with pay and without really working, as well as remuneration for holidays.

Nothing provided for in this article gives the employer the authority to deny workers rights or guarantees which they have previously obtained, under the pretext that they are not mentioned in this article or that they are mentioned in a lesser degree or regulation.

Chapter II

Social Rights

Article 31.—In order to promote and protect the economic and social interests of the Nicaraguan people, the following is guaranteed:

1.—The right to found and promote popular, community, neighborhood and rural organizations, etc.; and professional and trade-union associations.

2.—The right of trade unions to form federations or national confederations and of these to found or become members of international trade union organizations.

3.—The right to found and promote work and production cooperatives.

Article 32.—All workers have the right to strike, exercised in conformity with the law.

Article 33.—Everyone has the right to social security; to the realization of the rights indispensable for his dignity and the full development of his personality; to a standard of living which assures the health and well-being of himself and his family, and especially, food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services; and the right to social security in the event of unemployment, sickness, motherhood, disability, widowhood, old age, death, orphanage, professional risks or other cases of loss of means of livelihood.

Article 34.—The family is the natural group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and state.

Every person has the right to a given name and to the surnames of his parents or that of one of them. The law shall regulate the manner in which this right shall be ensured for all, by the use of assumed names, if necessary.

Marriage is based upon the voluntary consent of the man and the woman. Absolute equality of rights and responsibilities shall exist for both man and woman in the family relationship.

In case of dissolution of the marriage, the necessary protection of the children shall be assured.

Parents have the obligation to concern themselves with the education of their children, prepare them for socially useful work, and raise them as worthy members of society. Children are obliged to concern themselves with their parents and assist them.

Article 35.—Every minor child has the right, without discrimination, to the measures of protection required by his condition as a minor, on the part of his family, society and the state.

Parents have the same obligations towards children born out of wedlock as towards those born in wedlock. Any personal qualification regarding the nature of the filiation is forbidden. The right to investigate paternity is established.

Article 36.—The state shall adopt special measures to protect and assist minor children and adolescents, without discrimination for reasons of filiation or any other condition. Children and adolescents shall be protected against any form of economic or social exploitation. It is forbidden to employ minor children and adolescents for work harmful for their health and morality, or where their life might be in danger, or where normal development or their obligatory education might be affected.

Article 37.—The state shall provide special protection for mothers during a reasonable period of time before and after childbirth. During this period the mothers who work must be given leave with pay and the appropriate social security benefits.

The working mother shall be entitled to have the state watch over her minor children while she works.

Article 38.—The state recognizes the fundamental right of the Nicaraguan people to be protected against hunger and shall advocate the following programs.

1.—Infantile nutrition.

2.—The eradication of chronic malnutrition by ensuring adequate availability and an equitable distribution of food.

3.—Alimentary education aimed at improving diet through the imparting of principles of nutrition.

Article 39.—The Nicaraguan people are entitled to enjoy the highest level of mental and physical health. The state is obliged to adopt measures to achieve:

1.—The reduction of the mortality rate and of infant mortality, and the healthy development of children.

2.—The improvement, in all its aspects, of hygienic work conditions and the environment.

3.—The prevention and treatment of epidemic, endemic and professional diseases or of any other type and their eradication.

4.—The creation of conditions which would insure medical assistance for all and medical services in case of illness.

5.—An intensive and systematic practice of sports through the creation of all types of facilities.

Chapter III

Cultural Rights

Article 40.

1.—Everyone has a right to education.

2.—Elementary and secondary education shall be free, compulsory and accessible to all. A basic education should be promoted for those persons who have not received or finished their elementary education. Secondary eduation shall include technical and professional education in order to prepare everyone for qualified work and an understanding of the Nicaraguan reality. A close relationship shall exist between education and work.

Higher education should be equally accessible to all, on the basis of individual capability, by any appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive implantation of free education.

3.—Literacy is declared of social interest and is the responsibility of all Nicaraguans.

4.—The freedom of parents to choose for their children schools or academies other than those created by the state shall be respected, provided that those schools fulfill the minimum requirements prescribed or approved by the state, regarding educational material and that they strictly adhere to the national plans for education.

The right of individuals and entities to establish and direct educational institutions shall be respected, with the condition that they fulfill the requirements mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

The state shall supervise all of the country's educational centers. The supervision shall be constant in order to insure the carrying out of its educational policy and the national study plans and programs.

5.—The state shall approve the fees charged by private centers. In no case shall educational centers be aimed at profit-making.

6.—It is the duty of the state to guarantee, for all those children who might need them, food in the schools, clothing, shoes, school books and supplies.

Article 41.—Freedom to lecture and research are guaranteed as essential principles of education at all levels.

The teaching, administrative and economic autonomy of the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Nicaragua (UNAN) is guaranteed, so that it might respond to what is in the interest of the transformation of the nation, within national development planning. The state shall provide the necessary economic support so that it might develop a creative education and a scientific investigation in accordance with the national reality.

Article 42.—A National Council for Post-Secondary Education shall exist to coordinate higher education throughout the nation. It shall be composed of all the institutions at that level, and presided over by the Minister of Education.

Article 43—The Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua shall be the only one authorized by the state to decide upon the recognition of diplomas and titles of higher education issued by foreign institutions. The law shall establish the requirements for the professional incorporation of natives and foreigners who have graduated abroad, based on reciprocity, and in accordance with international agreements on the subject.

Article 44.—The state shall be exclusively in charge of the formation of teachers for pre-school and elementary education. The formation of the professorate for secondary education shall also be a primordial task of the state.

Article 45.—Everyone has the right to participate in the cultural life and to enjoy the benefits of scientific advancements and their applications. The state shall respect the freedom indispensabie for scientific investigation and creative activity, guaranteeing those persons the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which they are the authors.

Article 46.—The state shall be obliged to adopt those measures necessary for the conservation, development and diffusion of science and culture, which should be aimed at the full development of the human personality and of the meaning of his dignity, the strengthening of respect for human rights, and the transformation of Nicaraguan society.

The historical, cultural and artistic patrimony of the nation shall be protected by the state by means of the necessary laws.

TITLE IV

Final Provisions

Article 47.—No provision of this Statute shall be interpreted as conceding any right to the state, a group or individual, to undertake and develop activities or carry out illicit acts intended to suppress any whatsoever of the rights and freedoms recognized herein, or to limit it to any extent beyond that foreseen herein.

Legal measures intended to sanction crimes committed and the recovery of wealth either usurped or illicitly acquired during the dictatorial Somocist regime or under its protection are excluded.

Article 48.—The exercise of each person's rights and freedoms is inseparable from the fulfillment of his obligation to the community.

Article 49.—Under exceptional or emergency circumstances which put in danger the life or stability of the nation, such as civil or international war, or the danger that they might occur; because of public disasters or wars suffered and for motives of public order and state security, the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction shall adopt provisions which suspend in part or throughout all the national territory, the rights and guarantees set forth in the present Statute. The suspension may be ordered for a limited time and be extendable according to the circumstances ruling in the country.

What is provided for in this article in no way authorizes the suspension of the rights and guarantees set forth in the following articles: 5, 6 and 7 in what refers to slavery and involuntary servitude; 12, paragraph 1; 19; 25, clauses b), c) and d); 26; 34 and 35.

Article 50.—Any person whose rights and freedoms recognized in this Statute or in the Fundamental Statute promulgated on July 20, 1979, might have been violated may present a recourse for protection in conformity with the law.

TITLE V

Transitory Provisions

Article 51.—For a period of 60 days from this date, the exercise of the rights and guarantees set forth in this Statute are suspended for those persons under investigation for criminal offenses included in the penal code and in international covenants, committed during the Somoza regime.

Such a suspension does not affect the rights and guarantees indicated in Article 49 of this Statute.

Article 52.—This Statute shall become effective as of this date, from the moment of its diffusion by any mass media of communication, without hampering its later publication in the official Gazette.

Decreed in the city of Managua, on the twenty-first day of the month of August, nineteen hundred and seventy-nine, **Year of National Liberation.**

Violeta B. Chamorro
Alfonso Robelo Callejas
Sergio Ramírez Mercado
Moisés Hassan Morales
Daniel Ortega Saavedra

Articles 7, 11, 34 and 49 were reformed by Decree No. 1025, dated April 21, 1982, published in the *Gaceta* No. 99 on April 28, 1982.

Annex 19

Addresses

Following are addresses of some major organizations and institutions in Nicaragua. Readers interested in obtaining further information about the situation of the Nicaraguan people under the Sandinistas are encouraged to contact these organizations directly.

The Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua (CPDH):

Comision Permanente de Derechos Humanos de Nicaragua
Apartado Postal No. 563
(De Montoya 2 Cuadras al Lago)
Managua, Nicaragua, C.A.

The newspaper *La Prensa:*

La Prensa
Apartado Postal No. 192
Managua, Nicaragua, C.A.

The Catholic Church Curia:

Vicaria Episcopal
Apartado Postal No. 2008
Managua, Nicaragua, C.A.

The National Council of Evangelical Pastors:

Consejo Nacional de Pastores
Evangelicos de Nicaragua
Casa de la Biblia, Frente Puente
La Rarreynaga
Managua, Nicaragua, C.A.

The Conservative Party of Nicaragua:

Partido Conservador de Nicaragua (PCN)
Restaurante Terraza, 90 Varas Abajo
No. 1244
Managua, Nicaragua, C.A.

The Liberal Constitutionalist Party (PLC):

Partido Liberal Constitucionalista
Apartado Postal No. 3107
Managua, Nicaragua, C.A.

The Independent Liberal Party (PLI):

Partido Liberal Independiente
Ciudad Jardin F-29
Managua, Nicaragua, C.A.

The Social Christian Party (PSC):

Partido Social Cristiana
Apartado Postal No. 4774
(Iglesia Larreynaga 1½ Cuadras al Lago)
Managua, Nicaragua, C.A.

The Social Democratic Party (PSD):

Partido Socialdemocrata
Casa Central: Frente al Teatro Aguerri
Managua, Nicaragua, C.A.

The Superior Council of Private Enterprise:

Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada
Apartado Postal No 5430
Managua, Nicaragua, C.A.

The Confederation for Labor Unification (CUS):

Confederacion de Unificacion Sindical (CUS)
Apartado Postal RP-70
(Ciudad Jardin Q-3)
Managua, Nicaragua, C.A.

The Nicaraguan Workers Central:

Central de Trabajadores de Nicaraguan
Apartado Postal No. 1863
Managua, Nicaragua C.A.

Annex 20

Glossary

AMNLAE—*Asociacion de Mujeres Nicaraguenses "Luisa Amanda Espinoza"* (Nicaraguan Women's Association "Luisa Amanda Espinoza"): the Sandinista organization for women.

ANS—*Asociacion de Ninos Sandinistas* (Sandinista Children's Association): the Sandinista organization for grade schoolers.

ATC—*Asociacion de Trabajadores del Campo* (Rural Workers Association): the principal Sandinista labor confederation for farm workers.

Barricada—a daily newspaper, the official organ of the FSLN.

CDS—*Comites de Defensa Sandinista* (Sandinista Defense Committees): the Sandinistas' network of neighborhood or block committees.

CEPAD—*Comite Evangelico Pro Ayuda al Desarrollo* (Evangelical Committee for Aid to Development): a pro-Sandinista Protestant relief agency.

CNPEN—*Consejo Nacional de Pastores Evangelicos de Nicaragua* (National Council of Evangelical Pastors of Nicaragua): the umbrella organization for Protestant churches.

CNPPDH—*Comission Nacional para la Promocion y Proteccion de Derechos Humanos* (National Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights): the Sandinista "official" human rights commission.

Coordinadora Democratica—(Democratic Coordinating Board): the civic opposition coalition which includes four democratic parties (Conservatives, Liberal Constitutionalists, Social Christians, and Social Democrats), two labor organizations (Confederation for Labor Unification and Nicaraguan Workers Central), and the member organizations of the Superior Council of Private Enterprise.

COPROSA—*Comision de Promocion Social Arquidiocesana* (Archdiocesan Commission for Social Advancement): the Catholic Church's social services agency.

COSEP—*Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada* (Superior Council of Private Enterprise): the private sector umbrella organization representing tens of thousands of large, medium, and small businessmen, merchants, farmers, ranchers, and professionals. Its component organizations are members of the Democratic Coordinating Board.

CPDH—*Comision Permanente de Derechos Humanos de Nicaragua* (Permanent Commission on Human Rights of Nicaragua): the independent human rights commission.

CST—*Central Sandinista de Trabajadores* (Sandinista Workers Central): the Sandinista labor confederation for urban workers and some farm workers.

CTN—*Central de Trabajadores de Nicaragua* (Nicaraguan Workers Central): an independent social-Christian labor confederation, a member of the Democratic Coordinating Board.

CUS—*Confederacion de Unificacion Sindical* (Confederation for Labor Unification): an independent democratic labor confederation, a member of the Democratic Coordinating Board.

DGSE—*Direccion General de Seguridad del Estado* (General Directorate of State Security): the Sandinista secret police.

Direccion de Medios de Comunicaciones—(Directorate of Communications Media): the censorship office of the Ministry of Interior.

DN—*Direccion Nacional* (National Directorate): the nine-member leadership body of the FSLN. Nearly all members also hold government positions, including President Daniel Ortega, National Assembly President Carlos Nunez, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega, Interior Minister Tomas Borge, and Vice Interior Minister Luis Carrion.

El Chipote—the secret police's maximum security prison in Managua.

El Nuevo Diario—a pro-Sandinista daily newspaper.

FSLN—*Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional* (Sandinista National Liberation Front): the Sandinista party.

JS-19J—*Juventud Sandinista—19 de Julio* (Sandinista Youth—July 19): the Sandinista organization for those in their teens and twenties.

La Prensa—an independent daily newspaper.

MAP-ML—*Movimiento de Accion Popular—Marxista/Leninista* (Popular Action Movement—Marxist/Leninist): an ultra-left Communist party.

MDN—*Movimiento Democratico Nicaraguense* (Nicaraguan Democratic Movement): a social democratic party led by former junta member Alfonso Robelo forced into exile in 1982.

MINT—*Ministerio del Interior* (Ministry of Interior): the law enforcement/internal security arm of the Nicaraguan Government.

PCD—*Partido Conservador Democratica* (Democratic Conservative Party): a rump faction that, with Sandinista complicity, captured the party's name and now frequently collaborates with the FSLN.

PCdeN—*Partido Comunista de Nicaragua* (Communist Party of Nicaragua): an ultra-left Communist party.

PCN—*Partido Conservador de Nicaragua* (Conservative Party of Nicaragua): the principal conservative party, a member of the Democratic Coordinating Board.

PLC—*Partido Liberal Constitucionalista* (Liberal Constitutionalist Party): a moderate democratic party, a member of the Democratic Coordinating Board.

PLI—*Partido Liberal Independiente* (Independent Liberal Party): a leftist democratic party allied with the FSLN until 1984.

PPSC—*Partido Popular Social Cristiano* (Popular Social Christian Party): a leftist democratic party.

PSC—*Partido Social Cristiano* (Social Christian Party): a moderate democratic party, a member of the Democratic Coordinating Board.

PSD—*Partido Socialdemocratica* (Social Democratic Party): a moderate democratic party, a member of the Democratic Coordinating Board.

PSN—*Partido Socialista Nicaraguense* (Nicaraguan Socialist Party): a Moscow-line Communist party allied with the FSLN.

Radio Catolica—the Catholic Church's radio station, closed by the Sandinistas in January 1986.

Radio Sandino—the FSLN radio station.

SMP—*Servicio Militar Patriotico* (Patriotic Military Service): the Sandinista program of forced military conscription.

TPAs—*Tribunales Populares Anti-Somocistas* (People's Anti-Somocista Tribunals): the special tribunals established by the Sandinistas in 1983 to adjudicate cases involving counterrevolutionary activity.

turbas divinas—(divine mobs): the Sandinista mobs directed by Department F-8 (Mass Organizations) of the secret police and composed of members of the Sandinista Defense Committees and other FSLN groups.

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